

BEFORE THE DAWN

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Before the dawn


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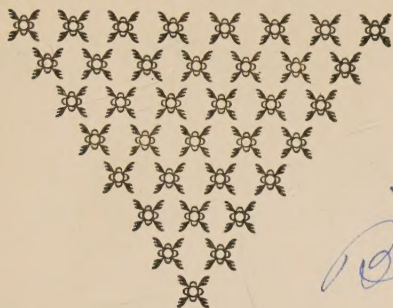
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BEFORE THE DAWN

by TOYOHICO KAGAWA



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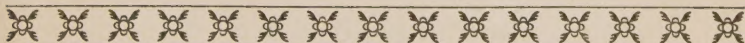
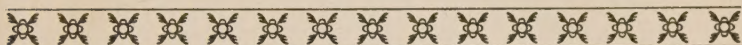
Anderson College and Theological Seminary

Anderson College and Theological Seminary

BEFORE THE DAWN

by TOYOHICO KAGAWA, 1884-1960

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE
BY I. FUKUMOTO AND T. SATCHELL



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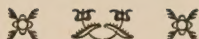
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THIS book was first published in Japanese under the title "Shisen Wo Koete" and an English version was brought out under the title "Across the Death-line" and met with a huge sale that approximated half a million copies in Japan and the East. The present text has been thoroughly revised by the same translators, and it is a faithful rendering of one of the most remarkable books of modern times. The present publishers must assume entire responsibility for the change in the title. It is felt to be fully justified because of the false impression gained by many who saw the title for the first time and inferred that the book dealt with life after death, whereas nothing in recent years, unless it be the novels of Dostoievsky, concerns itself with this life and this day more passionately or more poignantly than this novel of a human spirit in search of truth.

THE PUBLISHERS.

18843

PREFACE

TOYOHICO KAGAWA, the author of "Across the Death-line" (*Shisen Wo Koete*), was born in Kobé in 1888 and was brought up in Tokushima Prefecture in Shikoku. After attending the Middle School of Tokushima he went to Tokyo, where he studied at the Meiji Gakuin, a Christian College. Later he attended a private theological seminary in Kobé, and finally completed his theological education by spending two years in America, whither he went in 1914, studying at Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary and obtaining the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

It was in 1910, when he was only twenty-two years of age, that Mr. Kagawa went to live in the slums of Shinkawa, on what was then the eastern boundary of Kobé, and with the exception of the two years spent in America he has lived there ever since. Although the labours of his pen have now brought him fame and fortune he has announced his decision that he will continue to live in the slums till he dies.

Mr. Kagawa is not merely a charity worker and Christian teacher. He takes a strong interest in the Labour movement and is at present Secretary of the Japan Labour Federation. He was also second on the list of those nominated to represent the workers of Japan at the International Labour Conference, a nomination, however, which he declined. In 1921 Mr. Kagawa took part in encouraging the men in the great strike at the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Yard at Kobé, for which he was arrested and detained, but released without any charge being brought against him. In regard to his political opinions, Mr. Kagawa describes himself as a "Guild Socialist," but there is nothing militant about his Socialism. He is, to coin a convenient term, a "passivist," inasmuch as he adheres strictly to the principle of non-resistance. The Christian Socialist movement in England of the last century has his sympathies. Apart from his political opinions the regard felt for him as a practical philanthropist always ensures for him a respectful hearing.

"Across the Death-line" was begun some sixteen years ago, but after three-fifths of it had been written it was thrown aside for other literary labour. Later, on the request of his publisher for further works from his pen, Mr. Kagawa took up the novel again and added the section dealing with the slums. The popularity of the novel when it was published in October, 1920, was instantaneous. A new edition was called for before the month was out, followed by eight more editions in the early months of 1921. The present translation is made from the tenth edition, but since that was issued the editions have run into hundreds and the book is still selling well. A conservative estimate gives the number of copies sold at a hundred and fifty thousand.

Since the translation of "Across the Death-line" was completed a continuation has appeared under the sub-title of "A Shooter at the Sun" (*Taiyo wo iru-mono*). It carries Eiichi's life in the slums a stage further, and from it, with the permission of the author, has been taken the chapter which forms the conclusion of the present translation. It has been added, not only as of interest in itself, but as removing the suspense as to Eiichi's fate which only a perusal of the continuation could otherwise satisfy. Mr. Kagawa is now engaged on a third volume of the novel, which, it is understood, will deal chiefly with Labour questions.

Mr. Kagawa, it may be added, is a prolific literary worker in other directions, his publications, including volumes of essays, poems, dramas, theological works and scientific studies of social subjects, amounting in all to about twenty in number.

The translators steadily kept in view the high ideal of making the translation read to those for whom it is intended as the original reads to those for whom it is intended. Nobody can be more conscious than themselves how far they have failed. Their only consolation is that had they not maintained this ideal they might have failed still more disastrously. In translating from languages so widely removed as Japanese and English there is not only the difficulty of finding turns of expression which shall convey the tone of the original, but there is also the difficulty that the Japanese mind does not respond in just the same way as the European. The intention is the same, but the mode of expression differs. In these circumstances a literal translation, even

if intelligible, serves only to give an air of quaintness, and as the Japanese themselves are not sensible of any such quaintness in their language, evidently a wrong impression would be created by any attempt at literality. Many devices have been resorted to in order to overcome this difficulty, even to the rendering of an expression by its value rather than its form, although this has been done as sparingly as possible. The dialect which gives so much flavour to the original has been indicated, although no special consistency has been aimed at. In conclusion the translators have the hope that they have made the Japanese appear a natural, human people, and Japan a country where babies cry as much as anywhere else—where old people are as garrulous, young people as foolish, rich men as acquisitive, and poor men as patient as in any other quarter of the globe.

It only remains for me to record the untimely death in July, 1923, of my friend and collaborator Mr. I. Fukumoto, but for whose encouragement and valuable assistance this translation would never have been attempted. Whatever there is of accuracy in it must be ascribed to him; its faults I must bear myself. It is my melancholy privilege to have his name associated with mine on the title page.

Acknowledgments are due to the proprietors of the "Japan Chronicle" of Kobé, in the columns of which the translation first appeared.

THOMAS SATCHELL.

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

TO those not familiar with Japan a few remarks on the mode of life will make the novel more understandable.

The Japanese live in houses made of wood and plaster. In the better class house there is a small entrance-hall and three rooms, the front room or guest-chamber, looking on to what garden there may be, an inner or middle room, and a back room opening on to the kitchen, the last being the sanctum of the housewife. All three rooms communicate with each other by sliding doors. The floors are covered with mats of some two to three inches in thickness, of the regular size of six feet long and three feet wide, and the rooms are planned to contain so many mats. It is therefore convenient to state the size of the room by the number of mats it contains. The doors are all sliding doors, those for admitting light (screens) being covered with a white translucent paper. A kind of narrow verandah or gangway connects the rooms from outside, so it is not necessary to pass through the rooms to get from one to another. On the outer edge of the verandah are sliding wooden shutters. These are all packed away in the daytime, but are shut at night, enclosing the house like a box. Some of the better class houses now have both glass and wooden shutters, the glass shutters serving to keep out the cold winds in the daytime.

There are no chairs or tables. Cushions take the place of chairs, and where the food is not served directly on the mats a very low table is used. Writing desks are also made low. Warmth is obtained by means of charcoal burnt in a brazier, the airy nature of the house preventing the fumes collecting to the danger point.

Cooking is also done on charcoal braziers of another kind, which may be likened to stoves. The kitchen has generally only one or two mats, the larger proportion of the space being boarded. Moreover in the kitchen the flooring does not occupy the whole of the room, there being an unfloored part (described as "basement")

in the translation in default of a better term) where the less cleanly part of the house duties is performed.

In the guest-room the only ornament is an alcove, where generally a picture is hung and a vase placed. There are no bedsteads, but quilts (wadded with cotton-wool) are spread on the mats to sleep on. The coverlets are thinner quilts of the same kind. In the daytime the quilts are stored in cupboards built into the house.

In regard to apparel, a kimono, with clogs or sandals, is generally worn, though European clothes, with boots or shoes, are *de rigueur* among students, officials of all ranks, and office clerks with any pretensions to gentility. Women almost invariably wear kimonos, with clogs or sandals, although girl students are now taking to shoes. The kimono is too well known to need description. For male use there are two varieties, the long-sleeved and the tight or narrow-sleeved, the latter being chiefly worn by workmen and students. The workman, however, has his own proper garb, which is a kind of short coat with the crest or trade-mark of his employer on the back, and very tight trousers or pantaloons. With the growth of the large factories the distinctive workers' dress tends to disappear, however, dungaree and overalls taking its place.

In regard to the pronunciation of Japanese, the consonants are pronounced as in English, except that "g" is always hard as in "go" and "ch" always soft as in "each," and the vowels as in Italian, "i" being sounded as in "pique," "e" as in "ten," etc. "Ei" is pronounced as in "vein," and "ai" and "ae" as in "die." Final "e" is always pronounced as in "saké," "Kobé," "Katsunosuké" (sounded almost like "Katsnoské"), etc.

The endings "machi," "dori," "cho," and "michi" correspond to the English "road," "street," etc. As it is sometimes difficult to separate them from the word to which they are suffixed, it has been thought best to leave them untranslated.

The Japanese yen is roughly equivalent to the American fifty cents or the English two shillings. A hundred sen make one yen.

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CHAPTER I

At Meiji University



THERE is a place near Shirokané in Shiba, Tokyo, where three valleys meet. There everything is fresh and green; only in the dank places of the ravine, where last year's rice-stubs have not been ploughed up, is the ground bare. In the depth of the valley nearest to Osaki, where grow innumerable cryptomerias, whose tops seem to reach above the clouds, stands Marquis Ikeda's mansion. On the hill nearest Shirokané there are one or two temples, but on the middle hill there are neither houses nor temples; only slender chestnuts and oaks grow in great profusion.

On a glorious day at the beginning of May, a youth was lying in the shade on the grass on the middle hill reading a book. He looked above the medium height,—a slender figure, dressed in a well-fitting black woollen uniform, the brass buttons of which were all marked with the letters "M.G." His face was dreadfully pale, his nose high, and his cheek bones a little prominent. His eyes were rather large and keen, and their shape showed their owner to be high-spirited.

He was in the habit of coming to this place at intervals and opening a book, though of late not reading it very attentively. Rather he would shut his eyes and fall into a muse,—not of long duration, for he soon became sleepy. His dream over he would quickly turn to his book again, repeat some three or four lines, and then hasten back towards Shirokané along the field paths.

To-day he had come again and opened his book according to custom. As he lay there, by a path above his head there descended leisurely a youth of about twenty, neatly dressed in Japanese clothes, with a cap, and carrying a stick. He was not tall, but he was stoutly built, with thick eyebrows, a hairy chin, and a ruddy face. He was returning that way from a walk, when catching sight of the uniformed student lying on his side reading a book, he stopped suddenly and called to him.

"Halloa, Niimi, what are you doing there? Drop it, drop it!"

"Oh, is that you, Suzuki," called out the reader. "Where have you been?"

"I? Oh, I've been in the direction of the Akara temple at Meguro. How can you read your old books or whatever they are in this glorious spring weather? If I had known you were idling away your time in this place I'd have taken you with me to Meguro. Melancholia again?"

"Nonsense!"

"What's that book? Philosophy? Drop it, drop it!" and coming nearer Suzuki squatted down on the grass at Niimi's side and picked up the fallen volume. "What's all this? Upanishads—is that the way you pronounce it? Hm! 'The Sacred Books of the East.' What is it?"

"They are the Sacred Books of the East, which were probably written between 1300 and 600 B.C. Don't you know them? The Rig Veda—didn't you hear Mr. Kamimura refer to it yesterday in his lecture on the history of Buddhism?"

"Well, what about it?"

"These developed from that."

"What funny things you read. I haven't got time to read such books; I'm too busy preparing my lessons. You are a wonder. What's it all about inside?" and he opened the book, which up to now he had only been looking at from the outside, and passing over the preface, which ran to about thirty pages, he began to read the text, which was printed in big type. "'All is Brahma. We should meditate that in this universe everything begins, ends, and exists in Brahma.' Aha, pantheism, eh? It's rather interesting though. But, Niimi," he added, as he closed the book, "you don't really believe in the mythical pantheism described in this book?"

"You've got as much understanding as a child," returned

Niimi. "Read just one book of Indian philosophy and then ask me that question again. Students who haven't read a line of Indian philosophy have got into the habit nowadays of treating it very contemptuously. As long as you are on an inferior level that is mere folly. When you have reached a higher level then you can begin to call it pantheism or anything else you like."

Suzuki was in the class below Niimi's.

"Looking at the thing from the common sense point of view," said Suzuki, "the law of cause and effect and matter are not one and the same thing. If the law which brings all things into unison becomes disjointed, how is it possible to get unison?"

Niimi was nonplussed for a moment.

"You should study the works of Spinoza," he said. "What scientist with any training would believe the silly story of creation and the rest? But you are an earnest Christian and came here to prepare for the ministry, and though I don't pretend to be a Spinoza, I'm not going to persecute you for your faith. Create what gods you like. The indestructibility of matter, the conservation of energy, evolution,—how can 20th century civilisation, believing these things, credit such foolish stories about the creation of heaven and earth."

Niimi argued earnestly.

"Yes," answered Suzuki, "but the indestructibility of matter, and the conservation of energy, and evolution,—these are only suppositions,—matters of faith. I don't know much about it, but they seem to be subjective deductions, not inductions. I have read something like that in logic."

"But Haeckel—have you read Haeckel? Monism, you know; the theory that mind and matter are the same thing seen from two different sides,—that we continue our evolution for ever, that is that we are becoming God."

The discussion had become a very earnest one.

"Then what becomes of mankind when they die?" asked Suzuki.

"They become atoms. There's nothing extraordinary about that, is there?"

"What nonsense! Does God renew himself again from atoms? So I suppose evolution becomes devolution, and morality and the arts are only a dream."

"I can't argue with you when you don't understand."

"However, it's four o'clock," said Suzuki, looking at his watch, "and supper will be ready in another half hour, so we'd better be getting back. We've had a good discussion to-day."

"Yes," said Niimi, "let's go back," and he stood up and brushed the dust from his clothes.

So, Suzuki leading, they both went along the narrow field paths, round the hill, up by the water-wheel, and along the fence surrounding the grove.

"Doesn't Buddhism teach the same principles as modern science?" asked Suzuki. "Why did you enter the Meiji Gakuin? You ought to have gone to the Buddhist University."

"Yes, from the philosophical point of view Buddhism is sound. But it is really worthless. From the time I was seventeen or eighteen I was attracted to philosophic questions and suffered great distress of mind. I attended the middle school in my native place for three years and when I was fifteen came up to Tokyo and drifted about from one school to another. I hardly ever took up my school books at that time, but spent my time from morning to night in reading poetry and philosophy and the magazines. I was in great distress of mind. I went to the Takanawa Buddhist Middle School. Did any one tell you?"

"No, I didn't know. So you've been fond of philosophy since you were a little boy. Whatever made you so fond of philosophy?"

"Well, for one thing I lost my mother when I was ten years old, and was brought up by my stepmother, and the reason why I left home was because of the death of my elder sister. Naturally my heart seemed to turn to philosophy. I have heard that you became a Christian in much the same way,—that you lost all your people in a tidal wave, and that if it had not been for that you would never have had any doubts about life, or thought about religion and God."

"Yes, it's true. So you went to the Takanawa Middle School. What a funny place to go to! Buddhism's worthless, is it?"

"Yes, I went there to be relieved of my doubts, but it was useless. On the contrary my troubles increased, because I saw things from the inside."

"Yes?"

"I also became a disciple at the Kencho Temple at Kamakura,

but it was all foolishness. Zen, too. Nowadays Zen has become very popular, but Buddhism generally is like Zen,—only the outline is left; the colouring is all gone, and all the dozens of temples at Kamakura have become mere lodging-houses. You probably saw in the paper the other day how they were going to sell the chief image of Buddha at the Raiko Temple. It's a masterpiece of Unkei, the famous sculptor, and is greatly admired. Buddhism is a mere negation of morality and character, and then they humbug the uneducated by their talk. It's useless; it isn't a thing that flesh and blood can believe in."

"Yes, that's true. The Hongwanji scandals and so on have covered it with ridicule. But how was it that you came to a place like the Meiji Gakuin?"

"My father forced me to study law and sent me to the First High School, but in the first term of the third year I was suddenly taken ill with hæmorrhage of the lungs—my mother and elder sister, you know, both died of consumption,—and the doctor told me my lungs were affected. So I spent a year at Chikasaki and another year at Hachijo Island. After that I had lost all heart for the study of the law. I felt specially drawn towards religion, but as I was tired of Buddhism I thought I would spend a year or two at the Meiji Gakuin. So I came here in September last year."

"What do you think of the Meiji Gakuin?" and Suzuki looked in Niimi's face.

"I certainly thought that Christianity would be fuller of love than it is," answered Niimi.

"Yes, I felt that too, especially when I first came here. But, Niimi, if you think the Christians in the country and the Christians in Tokyo are the same you are making a mistake. The true Christian is a Nathaniel who sits under his fig-tree in a corner in the country and dreams of the kingdom of God."

"I don't think that the ancient fervour of Christianity wells up in the hearts of believers nowadays."

"Yes, I'm strongly of that opinion too. See how the Christians nowadays form associations and such like during war time."

"Yes, and where have the dreams of the times of the apostles gone? The fervour and fire which could brave the terrors of crucifixion have all disappeared."

"That's true. I've been praying for their return."

"But it all resolves itself into the economic question. You heard the argument I had with Hirano the other day,—at the Literary Society?"

"You were scolded by the recorder, weren't you?"

"Yes, I caught it. But if you don't put the spiritual world in the terms of the flesh you don't get any response from people, do you? What would be the use of a Christianity which could only make empires like that of China and not commonwealths like those of America and Britain? Isn't that so? Our modern ideas of Socialism are a development from Christianity. Saint-Simon and Fourier, for instance, wanted to make the world as it was at the time of the apostles. Yes, if Christianity were not symbolised by the idea of Socialism . . . That's why I told the recorder, 'You can teach your school imperialism, but that's not Christianity, you know.'"

"What did the recorder say to that?"

"Well, he said that, at any rate, the Ministry of Education demands that any one propagating Socialism among the students shall be kept under strict control, and I mustn't deliver such violent, destructive doctrines from the lecture platform before the students while I was in the school."

"I certainly don't think that Christianity and our national system can be harmonised. I can't altogether accept Socialism, but it's very funny to hear Japanese believers going about saying that Christianity and the national system do not clash."

"What fools! These worldly Christians are afraid of such sycophantic prostitutes of learning as Tetsujiro Inoué and Hiroyuki Kato. But in spite of all their explanations why Christianity and nationalism do not clash, they do clash. How much better would it be for them to say positively that they do clash."

Going from subject to subject the two passed along by the side of the slaughter-house into a road planted on both sides with cryptomerias, proceeding in the direction of Shirokané. There was a long pause in the conversation, and then Suzuki half murmured, "What strange experiences you have had."

While they were still among the trees, just where the road turns to the right, they heard somebody calling after them, "Suzuki!" "Niimi!"

Suzuki and Niimi stopped abruptly to see who it was and found it was the members of the Gluttons' Club,—Tamura, Inoué,

Matsuda, and Sanda, four high-spirited youths who were first-year students in the higher school, having passed up from the lower school.

Tamura occupied a room next to the dining-hall in the Harris Hall. He was of medium height, with his hair cut short, and still wore the cap of black cloth that he had worn for full four years from the time that he was in the lower school, although it was now very discoloured. He was the President of the Gluttons' Club. Three times a day, towards meal times, before the dining-hall was opened, he would go and look through the key-hole to see what they were going to have to eat. One student had made a rhyme about Tamura, which ran:—

When he gets up or is studying
There's a frown upon his face;
But when he's in the dining-hall
It's quite another case.

Inoué, who was called "The Flesh," was an amusing fellow who made a special study of love. He had curly hair and wore spectacles. After he had got into the higher school he let his hair grow long and parted it in the middle, and it was said that for the sake of making his hair flat he kept his hat on when he was studying in his room and even when he went to bed.

Matsuda was called the "Fortune-teller." He was of low stature and had a face like Daikoku, the god of luck.

Sanda was tall and thin and laughed from morning till night over the most trivial matters, such as the width of a person's nostrils or a dog slipping on some dirt in the road.

Niimi and Suzuki stopped and waited while the four, laughing continually, came along together to where they were standing. They were all laughing as loud as they could, holding their sides and swaying backwards and forwards, and Niimi and Suzuki looked on in astonishment as the four, staring at Niimi, burst into laughter again and again, as though they were making game of him. Niimi felt as if he were being bewitched by evil spirits.

"What do you mean by making fools of people?" he asked.

Matsuda was the first to speak.

"Oh, Niimi," he said, "shall I tell you?" and he gave him a nudge.

Then Tamura joined in. "Ha-ha-ha! You said you were never going to get married, you are such a pessimist. And you didn't attend school yesterday, but spent the day in bed."

"And then last night," added Matsuda, "you went out with your hair nicely parted in the middle and without a hat, to Nihon-enoki, to get something nice to eat in the street. What's our philosopher been thinking of lately?"

"What stuff you're talking," said Niimi, and he laughed feebly.

Inoué followed Matsuda. "You looked awfully glum when you were eating those nice things," he said.

Sanda turned to Suzuki. "You live next door to the philosopher," he said. "Did he treat you last night?"

"No," said Suzuki, with a slight laugh.

"I saw Niimi buying some sweet potatoes last night. He must have followed imperial principles and eaten them all himself, eh?" and Sanda laughed.

As the six went walking on Niimi began to defend himself. "Last night, there was nothing very nice for supper," he said, "so I went out to buy some potatoes."

"Really?" said Matsuda.

"You are all always so full of spirits," said Suzuki.

"That's because we eat two or three times as much as you do and so develop our energy," replied President Tamura, as representative of the others.

"Hear, hear," cried the other three.

Niimi went on silently. He was trying to be as lively as the members of the Gluttons' Club, but he had a heavy heart within his breast and was in no mood for joking. There came into his head an article that he had read four or five days before in the *Literary Digest* about how everything turns to comedy in modern times. But in his heart he felt that the writer of that article could not guess the depths of his misery. Just then they were passing by a place where some houses were being built. A cart full of stones was standing there and the horse had his head in a feeding bucket, which was hung round his neck.

When Niimi saw this he turned to Tamura. "Tamura," he said, "that horse is cleverer than you. Look at him. You can't eat like that without chopsticks."

All the others burst into laughter, but Tamura, with a very

earnest face, said, "Niimi, I don't know much about Socialism, but isn't it the same as gluttony?" and he kept a solemn face as he delivered his argument.

"Bravo, bravo," called out Sanda.

"They cry, 'Give us plenty to eat,' don't they?" went on Tamura, "and we are not behind them in demanding plenty to eat. Isn't that so, Sanda?"

"Certainly," replied Sanda.

Niimi only laughed. He was thinking how he could escape from their chaff.

"What do you say to three cheers for the Meiji Gakuin Gluttons' Club?" cried Matsuda, looking at his companions.

But Suzuki sniggered. "The motion's too previous, Matsuda," he said. "If you're going to change the name of the Gluttons' Club to the Meiji Gakuin Socialist Party you'll have to make Niimi president."

"All right; I agree," said President Tamura.

"I vote for the philosopher president, the love letter president," called Matsuda.

"I vote for him too," said Sanda.

"The fashionable president," added Matsuda. "The president with his hair parted, the president who stands and eats things in the street, the president who eats sweet potatoes all by himself."

While they were thus chaffing they had mounted the hill and had come to the gates of the Meiji Gakuin, where, at the call of Tamura, three cheers were given for President Niimi. Just then the bell at the boarding-house began to ring, summoning them to supper, at which they all burst into meaningless laughter.

CHAPTER II

A Letter from Home



AFTER supper and a bath Niimi thought of going to his room. He lingered awhile at the entrance to Harris Hall, however, though not for any particular reason. In one of the rooms the gas was burning. Probably the Juniors' Association was holding a meeting. The gas was also alight in the hall of President Yamakawa's house. Between the hall and the President's residence he could see the top of a steeple on which there was a cross, but in the twilight it was obscured by the leaves of the trees and could only be seen faintly, reminding one of a monastery in a wood. The trees planted every year by the graduates had become so dense that in the gloaming it seemed as if all the trees, branches and leaves were joined together. It was impossible to count them. Now the gaslight began to shine brighter. The recreation ground was deserted. No lights could be seen in the Divinity School, but from Dr. Imbrié's house small rays of light filtered through the surrounding trees. Hepburn Hall seemed very vast and high and to occupy a large space. There the gaslight was shining from every room, and from somewhere at the back came the monotonous sound of a piano.

Some one was coming out of Hepburn Hall towards the place where he was standing. He was dressed in Japanese clothes with a cap, and Niimi soon recognised him as Tsukamoto. When he was a short distance away Niimi called to him, but Tsukamoto went on despondently and did not answer till he was beginning to mount the steps to the entrance, when he saw Niimi.

"Ah, Niimi, I'm awfully sorry. I was coming to see you yesterday, but I was busy all day. To-day, as I had to go to the Warden's room I thought of calling in on you."

"Yes? Well, let's go up to my room now," and Niimi and he went up the stairs. They had gone up four steps and come to the landing when Niimi turned round for a moment.

"No good?" he asked.

"That? No, it's no good. The place was taken long ago by a Higher Commercial School student. And they say they don't pay very well."

Niimi was not a little disappointed at this answer, but he did not betray his feelings and showed Tsukamoto into his room. At the top of the stairs on the left there was an opening, facing which was Suzuki's room, with Niimi's next door. Suzuki had gone out for a walk again after supper, and as his gas was not alight apparently he had not yet returned.

Niimi entered his room and lit the gas, which shone into every corner and made the room look very cheerful. It was about eleven feet by nine feet, the walls white, with the lower part covered with panels painted a mixture of brown and sepia, which was a reminder that it had once been an old class-room. There were two windows opening to the west and north, and on the south side there were sliding screens separating it from the next room. A table stood in the northwest corner and there was a large bookcase facing the door.

"Please sit down," said Niimi, pulling the gas down as far as it would go. It shone brilliantly over the desk and you could read the gold lettering on the backs of the books in the bookcase. Of class-books, there was only Williams' *Outline of Politics*; all the others were theological books. The big red one was Flint's *Philosophy of History*, and the thin blue book in four volumes was Pfeiderer's *Philosophy of Religion*. Then there was a copy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which had apparently been well studied, and also books on Kant by Müller and Caird. In the corner, in a yellow cover, was the Zend Avesta, and an open volume, apparently just thrown aside, of the Upanishads. There was also a Bible.

"Thank you," said Tsukamoto, and entering he went across the room to look at a picture by Leloir, which was hung above the bookcase.

"The more one looks at this the better it is," he said. "I'm awfully fond of it."

"Are you fond of it too? The female figure, clasping a little boy in her arms, with that pensive background, seems to touch my heart for some reason or other and pleases me greatly."

Tsukamoto began to laugh when Niimi spoke of the "female figure."

"It may sound a funny thing to ask," he said, "but tell me, didn't you receive a letter from a girl recently? They say it made you blue."

"Where did you hear that?"

"They were talking about it just now in Hepburn Hall. It all came from your being dispirited yesterday and not attending classes. Takada began it by discovering that you had received a letter from a girl four or five days ago, and he went about telling every one. And yesterday morning you said that you'd never get married, and you shut yourself up in your room. Is it true?"

"No, all false. Five days ago I got a letter from my younger sister. That was the letter that Takada was telling every one about."

"But Takada said that if it was a letter from your young sister you would be able to show it, but you didn't show it to any one."

"I wasn't able to show it to any one because there were some private matters in it. Fellows of that kind like making a fuss, and so he went about telling every one that the philosopher had got a letter from a girl. Because this is the only time that I have received a letter from my sister since I've been attending the Meiji Gakuin, and I haven't got any girl friend, he makes a fuss, of course, about my having a sweetheart."

While Niimi was speaking the contents of his sister's letter came back into his memory, causing his heart to sink. Tsukamoto was still standing, but Niimi sat down.

"What about that matter?" he asked.

Tsukamoto turned a little towards Niimi and glanced at his face while he fingered the bow of his Japanese cloak. "I'm in awful trouble," he said. "I've just been to the Warden's room to ask and he says it's no good. I've decided to leave the school," and Tsukamoto hung his head.

"Leave? Have you decided? I'm awfully sorry. But I suppose it can't be helped. But if you leave the school what are you going to do? If you could carry on for another two years you would be able to graduate in the high school and then you would have some social standing and be able to increase your

knowledge of foreign languages, which would be awfully convenient. Still, you have received some benefit from the three years you have spent in the Meiji Gakuin."

"Yes, I certainly won't forget the three years I have spent here. I can't forget them. Still, I don't want any more favours shown me. It is true I sell things to the fellows in the dormitory, but nevertheless I feel as if I were squeezing money out of them, showing them my cakes. I have thought many times that I would give up selling cakes."

"No, no, that's not so. It isn't a bad thing to sell cakes. If you didn't sell them cakes they would all go outside to buy them, so it's the same thing. What did the Warden say?"

"The Warden? Oh, he said that he couldn't square his accounts because my board was three months in arrears, and as I couldn't settle up, although I promised yesterday that I would pay up one month at least, there was nothing to be done. They couldn't keep students on charity, so for the present I had better leave the boarding-house. I was in the wrong and I hadn't any excuse, so I simply said 'Yes' and came away."

"That was a funny thing for the Warden to say."

"He spoke the truth."

"Well, I should call it rather impudent. They couldn't provide board on charity so you'd better get out. It would have been all right if they had waited for the month to elapse."

"But really, when a fellow's late with his board as I am it gives trouble, doesn't it?"

"Yes, but the Warden's a Christian, isn't he? He knows your circumstances. Even if it does give trouble not to pay up just now, he ought to make an effort to meet your expenses for the sake of your education. But, I say, if you were to pay up for one month would they let you stay on temporarily?"

"I suppose so," Tsukamoto spoke sadly, in a low voice.

"Well, I say, Tsukamoto. If there's . . ." and Niimi resolutely stretched out his hand and took from the drawer of his desk a five-yen note. "Here, I'll advance you this," he said. "Go and pay the Warden. Then you'll be able to go on studying if only for a little while. You needn't trouble about giving it back to me. I'll lend it to you in perpetuity."

"But, I say, I haven't paid you the four yen I borrowed last month and it would be a shame to take this too. You'll want

it to buy some books. I can't take it. On the contrary it is you who ought to have four yen from me," and shamefacedly Tsukamoto refused to take the money.

"But look here, you know my motives. Rather than read another book I'd like you to study for another month. You know I would, don't you?" Niimi had become very earnest.

"I know your good intentions, but . . ."

The sentence trailed off into nothingness.

"Tsukamoto," said Niimi, "look here. As a matter of fact I received this from my sister. I only changed the postal order to-day. I haven't got overmuch to meet my school expenses, as you may have guessed from the fact that I asked you to find me some work in translating. I haven't got very much, but it only means that I won't be able to buy more books, so if you take it as a gift it will be all right."

The explanation was given sympathetically and with kindly common sense.

"Well, I'll accept it temporarily," said Tsukamoto, peeping into the next room to assure himself that no one was there.

"It isn't a question of borrowing," said Niimi.

"Thank you," said Tsukamoto, and was silent.

Niimi was also silent for a time. Then he asked, "Are you going to attend the school all the same?"

"Well, after the way the Warden's treated me I think I will leave the boarding-house for a little time and try to get a position as private tutor in English, so as to save money for my school expenses. That was what I was thinking of doing. What do you think?"

"But will you be able to get back into the school again?"

"I don't know, but I think I'll try."

"The world doesn't always go as we want it to, does it?"

Tsukamoto looked down and was silent. The glaring gaslight glittered upon the pomade on his curly hair.

"When you go out into the world you want faith. I don't know what trouble I wouldn't go to to get faith."

Tsukamoto, leaning with his arm on the window-sill, gazed at the gaslight.

"But I don't understand God and Christ," he said. "I look upon Christianity as superstition," and he smiled slightly.

"But it is not. I am not a Christian, but whatever you may

think you can't say that there is no truth in its religious aspirations as they have flowed on through four thousand years of history. I have not yet fully grasped the meaning of the Cross myself, but there can be no doubt as to the greatness of Christ's character."

"Well, I know something about His greatness, but I don't understand it. Don't those who believe in Him and those who don't, go about their daily lives in the same way? It sometimes happens that those who don't believe behave better than those who do."

Tsukamoto ventured on strong opposition.

"You're always saying that," said Niimi, "but see if you are able to get on in society without faith?" Niimi was thinking of his young sister and his native place. "But life is a tragedy, isn't it?" he added.

Tsukamoto merely smiled again slightly. "You're always talking about things being tragedies or comedies, aren't you? Life is neither a tragedy nor a comedy to me. I really don't know what anything is."

Niimi lent on the desk with his cheek on his hand and was silent. Tsukamoto's words found an echo in his own heart.

~ In a little time Tsukamoto departed and Niimi took his sister's letter out of the drawer of his desk and read it again. It was written with a queer mixture of literary phrases and colloquialisms which made it difficult to read.

"I take my pen in my hand to write you a line. Dear brother, I hope you are well. I must apologise for not having written to you for a long time. I am very well, so do not be anxious about me. I am crying every day. Sometimes I think I would rather die. My stepmother in the country works me hard and is scolding me about something or other every day from morning till night. She says, 'You're Mrs. Kamé's child, ain't you? What makes you so stupid?' That is the way she scolds me continually. And she doesn't give me enough to eat. She treats me worse than the servant. I can't bear it. I ran away to my father's house some forty days ago. But father doesn't love me a bit. And father's new mistress, she does indeed treat me badly. Since I came here I have been crying every day. Please save me, dear brother. I have only you, brother, to trust to. And father is so angry with you, brother. He said he would not send you any

more school money from this month. Please take this five yen to help pay your school expenses though it is only a trifle. I am thinking if I can run away to Tokyo to you, for you to keep me. Rather than work for my stepmother in the country or for Umé it would be much better to go to Tokyo and work as a servant. Dear brother, if you can think of anything good, please let me know quickly. It is so dreadful that I can't write for tears. I have a lot more to tell you, but I can't do it now. Please take care of yourself.

"P.S. Please send an answer quickly."

Reading it, Niimi felt great sympathy with his sister. He read it twice and his tears began to flow. They were not only for his sister; he wept also for the hard fate of Tsukamoto and himself. Bending over the desk and holding his head in his hands, he had fallen into deep thought, when he heard a sound of footsteps in the next room, and Tsukamoto say, "Well, look here, I've got five or six yen, but there were some other expenses I was obliged to meet and I've already spent a yen of it." Then he heard some one politely answer "Thank you," and Tsukamoto's farewell as he went out and tramped down the stairs without pulling the sliding door to after him.

"There, again," Niimi heard another voice say, and then it added, "I say, Tanaka, isn't Tsukamoto a rotter?"

"Awful. He sells cakes to the fellows and then doesn't pay his own board bill but spends the money in eating, and his excuses are all lies. When he goes to another fellow's room he always goes away leaving the door open after him."

The voice was that of the student who had spoken politely to Tsukamoto.

Niimi was startled when he heard this and, wiping away his tears, he called out "Tanaka," trying to conceal his own grief by making his voice big. He was calling to the student who lived in the next room.

"Yes, what is it?" replied a rather startled voice.

"Does Tsukamoto tell lies?" asked Niimi.

Tanaka was still more startled. "I say," he said, "I wouldn't worry about that."

"Yes, but mayn't I ask?"

A younger voice joined in. "It-t-t was nothing."

This was Kasuga.

"I say, Kasuga, what lies did Tsukamoto tell you?"

"Do you know Shoda of the lower school?"

"Yes, I know him. What about him?"

"Well, it's reported that he gave Tsukamoto a thrashing the other day."

"A thrashing? Why?"

"Well . . . but perhaps I'd better not tell him, eh, Tanaka?"

"Tell me," said Niimi.

"Do you want to hear so very much?" said Tanaka. "You're very inquisitive," and he gave a satirical laugh.

"No, I'm not inquisitive, but I'm rather intimate with Tsukamoto, and it's necessary that I should know."

"N-N-Niimi, Tsukamoto's a bad lot. He sells cakes to buy things to eat. That's become his practice. He spends quite a lot of money in eating outside, and then he can't pay his board bill. Shoda heard about this and got angry. He said that it was necessary to punish Tsukamoto, and the night before last, they say, he gave Tsukamoto a thrashing behind the Theological College. Tsukamoto says he can't pay for his board because he has to give such a lot of credit. But that's only his excuse. The fact is that he eats it all up in apples and cake."

Niimi was surprised when he heard this, but still he thought it was a shame that poor Tsukamoto should have been thrashed.

"I think Shoda was really in the wrong," he said.

"Why?" It was Tanaka who was asking.

"Well," said Niimi, "you know that Tsukamoto only gets eight yen a month, and out of that he has to give a yen's credit and his lodging costs him another yen, so he has only six yen left. If he pays six yen for his board and gets his tuition fees remitted he hasn't got a penny left for himself. Moreover, in return for the remission of his tuition fees he has to work one or two hours after school, and on the top of that he has to study and take exercise. It's a pretty cruel state of affairs that doesn't allow Tsukamoto any pleasures, isn't it? I wonder whether it is necessary for mankind to exist without any pleasures."

Certainly Tsukamoto showed a lack of will-power. Repeatedly he had come to Niimi to borrow money to buy the cakes he sold, but had never returned it. Still, Niimi had never condemned him for that, and even now his attitude was unchanged.

Up to now the conversation had been carried on through the

sliding screens which separated the two rooms and kept the disputants from seeing each other. This seemed somehow to hamper the discussion, and Tanaka now pulled back the screen and came into Niimi's room with "That's all right what you say, but you know. . . ." Kasuga followed him. Tanaka was about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. He was tall and had a commanding look, but there seemed to be something wanting about him. He was in the same class as Tsukamoto, which was one below Niimi's. He also had to work for his school expenses, lending a hand in the boarding-house in collecting the board money, for doing which his own board money was remitted. Kasuga was about sixteen or seventeen,—a fine-looking fellow in the first-year class of the higher school. The two were bosom friends,—whether at study or at play, at exercise or on a journey or at church, they were never apart. This was because they had certain characteristics in common,—a great love of adventure and of nature. In the middle of the night, even, they were sometimes to be seen standing in the middle of the recreation ground,—Kasuga carrying a book on astronomy and Tanaka carrying a lantern to enable them to read, while they studied the constellations.

They stood by Niimi's desk to hear his explanation about Tsukamoto. Tanaka had his hand on Kasuga's shoulder, and was looking down on the desk. He began speaking very quietly.

"Your arguments are too extreme," he said. "I think Tsukamoto's punishment was quiet proper. Tsukamoto's studying at other people's expense, isn't he? Therefore he has no right to claim any enjoyment. In the first place he is wrong to rely upon other people for money. It's a great favour to be allowed to work one's way through school, isn't it? If on top of that you want to have enjoyment as well, then you'd better leave the school."

The sensitive Niimi felt as if he wanted to cry when he heard Tanaka's cruel arguments.

"Tanaka," he said, "I don't like to hear such colourless arguments from an upright Christian like you. If you Christians are satisfied with such shallow morality then you ought to desert all the churches throughout Tokyo and go to hear the sermons at the Zojo temple. It is certainly the heartlessness of you Christians which is expelling Tsukamoto from the dormitory and thus caus-

ing him to suspend his studies. The Warden has no sympathy for him; you have no sympathy for him; it seems that there is nothing for Tsukamoto to do but to abandon his studies. Christianity thus appears to be only a set of doctrines. Really if you say 'Amen' with your lips, oughtn't you to sell your clothes and your books and help Tsukamoto? Remember that it is you Christians that have already made him an outcast."

Niimi spoke excitedly, with tears flooding his eyes.

"Then suppose you try it to begin with."

"I, at least, am confident that I am doing something for him."

"But I doubt whether you can put your views into practice."

"But what did Christ say? Christ is not in your hearts. The Churches are the enemies of Christ," and Niimi tried to wipe away his tears unobserved.

Tanaka and Kasuga were not aware that Niimi was so high-strung and felt some astonishment.

"I didn't know philosophers had so much feeling," said Tanaka. "It is impossible to argue with a high-strung fellow like you," and taking Kasuga with him, he went back into his own room. Then, after some talk in an undertone, they turned out the gas and both went off somewhere.

Niimi was left weeping.

His tears continued to fall as he thought of the low morality of the Christians and their churches; of how he himself, by the end of the month, would be among those who had to earn their board and tuition; of poor Tsukamoto's fate; and of his stupid little sister. He sobbed when he thought of the unfortunate circumstances in which he and his sister were placed.

Suddenly Niimi came to a decision. It might seem a commonplace thing to do, but he must leave the Meiji Gakuin and throw himself into actual life, nursing his lofty ideals. What more noble ideal was there than to share in the actual life in the country with his only sister, who was loved neither by her father nor her stepmother?

He decided that he would return home that night immediately, and after a little anxious consideration as to how to meet his travelling expenses, he determined to sell his books.

When he went down to draw some water at the well to wash his face he saw the Great Bear high up in the sky to the north.

He thought it was probably not yet eight o'clock. A clapping of hands was coming from some of the younger students somewhere, and as he drew the water Niimi murmured "the bitter cup of the Cross."

While he was washing his face Suzuki came back from Hepburn Hall. Niimi told him of his intention to return home, and as he wanted to catch the half-past ten train, he asked Suzuki to call a second-hand bookseller.

A solitary student entered the 10.35 train for Kobé at Shinagawa that evening and started for the lonely west, after saying good-bye to some five or six friends who had come to see him off. That student was Niimi.

CHAPTER III

Returning Home



AS the train was full Niimi stood up till they reached Kanagawa. After leaving Kanagawa he spread a blanket on the floor and sat down on it and slept. They reached Nagoya at seven o'clock in the morning, and it was while nearing Gifu that he had a bad dream.

A gloomy view of what he was doing made him tremble. For what purpose was it? What would it lead to? These questions he asked himself and there was no answer. Only there remained in his mind the idea of comforting his sister and of attempting to tell his father all that he felt. The idea of "home" did not attract him. It only aroused recollections of sadness and gloom. The name of Kobé also sounded hateful in his ears.

Kobé was his birthplace. There he had been born twenty-two years ago. There, till the age of ten, he had been brought up. Those hills and seas had been his education. When he was ten years old his mother had died, and he and his elder sister had been placed in charge of the real wife at her home in Itano district, in Awa Province, Shikoku. At that time he had been separated from his younger sister and two younger brothers. He still recalled his elder sister and himself standing on the deck of the steamer. His thoughts passed to the dark gloomy house where death had separated him from his mother. At the end of Hyogo pier there was a warehouse with the words "Yamamoto Icehouse" on it in large letters, and to the east of that, next door, was his own house, No. 32 Shimagami-cho. To the west there was a small temple,—the famous Chikuto Temple. If you went to the east and turned a little you came to the Commercial Bank. The houses in the street were all low and dirty, the road was ash-coloured, and for some reason the air was oppressive. On the eaves of his house there was a street lamp, on which, almost

effaced, you could just read the name "Niimi." The house had wooden bars over the windows, and at the entrance there was a board on which was written "Japan Mail Steamship Co. Booking Office for Freight and Passengers." Opposite was the thatched house of Yamamoto, the millionaire of the neighbourhood, who owned the ice-house, and to the east there was a chemist, and next to that, in a corner house, a barber. Between the two there was a little shrine dedicated to Jizo, the god of children. The barber's house faced east and was the corner house of Isono-cho. Opposite the barber's was an ironmonger's; the daughter of the ironmonger was a friend of his dead elder sister. Behind the ironmonger's was a 'rikishaman's, and in front of the 'rikishaman's there was a well, with a road by the side of it running down to the seashore. Opposite this road there was a dealer in wood and charcoal named Izutsu, and next door was Shirotani's, the home of a friend of Niimi's in his boyhood. West of the thatched house and just in front of Niimi's barred windows, was the back of Fujii's, and next door to Fujii's was Oguri's. He was a rice broker. Then next to that was the back of Amo's, and behind Amo's was the well spoken of before. Niimi recalled that on the summer evenings the 'rikishamen used to bathe themselves with the water from the well. Oguri's house was formerly tenanted by a rich man named Hasegawa, but he failed on the share market and removed to Osaka. His son and Niimi were school friends, he remembered, and used to fight often.

One bitter memory came back to him—that of a certain autumn evening when he and young Hasegawa had had a quarrel. His opponent had come out with the door-bar and he himself had also got the bar from his own door. When they were just beginning to come to blows, Kumakichi, the clerk, had called him, and he had gone in very reluctantly. His mother, who had been sick so long, was just dead, and the clerk told him to go and see her. He went upstairs, but she had just drawn her last breath and he could only gaze in awe on her livid face.

Whenever he thought of this a shudder ran through him. Passing Osaka and nearing Kobé Niimi's recollections of the past became still more vivid, and his future darkened before him.

When he got off the train at Kobé Station his heart was beat-

ing wildly and the blood seemed to be running through his veins like fire. Just the thought of what was going to happen made his whole body tremble with fear. He was so impatient to finish the affair quickly that he was hardly able to keep still in the 'rikisha. But to jump from the 'rikisha and run all the way home would seem like the act of a madman, and he clenched his hands and fixed his gaze on the 'rikishaman's legs.

He told the 'rikishaman to go to 32 Shimagami-cho, but when he got there the signboard with the name Niimi had disappeared and also the street lamp. Amo's name was on the house and the door was shut. Inquiring at the chemist's next door he found that they had moved the previous month to Kajiya-cho. He went along to the Commercial Bank and then turned to the left into Kajiya-cho, along which he went to the Daikoku bathhouse, as he had been told, and there, on the other side of the street, was the lamp with Niimi on it. It was now six o'clock in the evening and the streets were filled with the yellowish haze of twilight. Somehow or other Niimi felt lonely, and as he pondered on why they had left Shimagami-cho, where they had lived for over twenty years and to which they had grown so accustomed, he felt still more lonely.

Outside the new house was much more imposing than the old one. There were glass doors at the entrance, and in the iron-barred windows there were glass frames, and he noticed white lace curtains.

Entering he was surprised to find that there was no one there whom he knew. Two years before, in the winter, just before going to the Bonin Islands, Niimi had paid a flying visit to Kobé. At that time his father was still a member of the Diet, and as the Diet was then in session his father was not at home. But he saw the old manager, Seihei Shima, who had been with them for twenty years, and somehow or other his presence had given him a sense of security and he had felt that he was indeed returning home. Now, on this evening, seeing no one he remembered, he was surprised.

There were three clerks, all busy with account books. The one sitting in front of the safe was probably the manager. He was a man about thirty-five years of age, his hair neatly parted, with a rather sharp-tempered face and a wrinkle between his eye-

brows. He laid down his pen as Niimi entered and said "Good evening," whereupon the other two lifted up their heads from their books. Niimi then saw that one of them was a young man, and the other a tall man with almond eyes and thick eyebrows and a good complexion.

Niimi decided to ask if that was Mr. Niimi's office. The person who seemed to be the manager replied that it was and then politely inquired Niimi's name.

"I am Eiichi," he replied.

"Ah, Mr. Eiichi," and the manager rose. "Please come in. The office is all in disorder, so please come upstairs."

The manager's reception was so polite that Niimi felt pleased and decided to go in. The 'rikishaman brought in his luggage and after it was all brought in Niimi was conducted upstairs. At the top of the stairs there was a largish room and next to that a smaller room, but the ceiling was so low that the room looked mean. There were clerks' clothes hanging all about the rooms, giving them the appearance of a clothes-press. They went into a third room at the back, of medium size, and there Niimi saw a woman of about forty lighting a lamp. When she had finished she bowed to him and went hurriedly downstairs. The lamp lit up the room. The person who had accompanied him upstairs brought a leather cushion out of the corner.

"Please sit down," he said, and he himself sat down very formally on the mats near the door.

Eiichi followed his example, although the other kept urging him to sit on the cushion.

"This is the first time that I have had the honour of seeing you," said the manager. "My name is Sankichi Murai. I beg your kind patronage," and he bowed very low.

Niimi knew that his own name appeared as the head of the house in the official register, but he did not display any pride.

"I am Eiichi," he said. "I hope to have your kind acquaintance," and he bowed.

Murai looked at Eiichi with a strange expression and asked him about his school.

"I ought to attend another year," Niimi replied, "but for some private reasons . . ." and his voice faltered.

"I believe it is a Christian school you have been attending?"

"Yes, a Christian school."

"The master said something about it the other day. Have you some business at Tokushima?"

"Yes, something occurred to me . . . Has my father been here lately?"

"Well, he's been very busy lately and we only see him about once every three months, but we had the pleasure of seeing him the other day when we were moving and he came over for a little time."

He clapped his hands and, looking towards the stairs, called for tea and the tobacco-box. Then, after apologising, he started downstairs, but stopped to ask whether Eiichi had had his supper yet. In the meantime the woman whom Niimi had seen lighting the lamp came up, and Murai whispered something to her.

Niimi looked round the room. He noticed there was in the alcove the same hanging roll that he could remember for more than ten years,—indeed, he could not remember a time when it was not familiar to him. Next to it was a vase which his father, many, many years ago, when he was a young man and was sent on a business trip by Eiichi's grandfather, had bought in a fit of extravagance at Kanazawa. He also remembered the ebony stand for the vase, and the magnificent ebony desk that stood in front of the window. Nor had he forgotten that he had been told that the screen in the corner had been given his father by Suichaku Nii, the artist. He recalled the history of each article in the room, one after another, and a feeling of wistfulness came over him. Then he remembered that he was returning to Tokushima and would meet his father face to face. His heart quickened as he wondered what would happen.

Murai returned to his former seat.

"How has your health been since your illness?" he asked.

Niimi felt some diffidence. "Thank you," he said. "My disease cannot be quite cured, you know, but it gives me no trouble now. I felt rather anxious last year at spending the winter in Tokyo, but I wasn't even laid up with a cold and my health was excellent."

"Ah, that is very satisfactory."

"Thank you, yes . . . Are Hozumi and Mori not still with you?"

Niimi was asking after a clerk and an apprentice whom he had seen there two years before.

"Yes, they are here still. They are probably still out in the bay. The sea is rather rough to-night and the launch is probably delayed."

"What is the name of the steamer?"

"The *Tosa-maru*. She's lying a long way out and they can't come back except on the launch."

As he spoke two children, one carrying a cake dish and the other a tobacco-box, came up the stairs. After them came their mother. Both the children had high, bulging foreheads, and like their father their eyes were deep-set. Neither of them was pre-possessing. Their mother was the woman whom Niimi had seen lighting the lamp. She had wavy hair, rather thin, and a large mouth. The three descended again after making the customary salutations.

Murai pressed Niimi to stay the night, but Niimi said that he was in a hurry and that he must go on. Just then Murai's wife and the two children came up again, carrying the supper, which was in foreign style and had been brought from a neighbouring eating-house. Niimi was at a loss to know what to say, so depressed was he. He took up the fork in order to try to eat something, but he felt ill at ease. He asked what time the next steamer went to Tokushima, and while he was getting his supper Murai rang up the shipping office on the telephone and asked.

"The sea's rather rough to-night," he reported as a result of his inquiries, "and in consequence the steamers are a little late in leaving Osaka. The ten o'clock boat won't be here till twelve and the twelve o'clock boat till one."

Murai's wife suggested that as it was then only seven o'clock the young master should take a bath and have a good nap before the boat started. "Because you won't be able to sleep on the boat for the roughness," she added, "and you're tired for certain with your train journey."

So after supper, according to the woman's direction, he went downstairs to go to the Daikoku bathhouse, which was nearly opposite. When he got down the young man in the office introduced himself as Yamada, while the one with the good complexion introduced himself as Hosokawa. The woman brought him a large towel from the back room and also a nickel soapbox. Just then Hozumi and Rokuya Mori came back.

"Ah, Bonbon," they cried, "are you off to Tokushima? When did you come from Tokyo?"

Rokuya went out into the back.

"Are you going to the bath?" said Hozumi. "I'll join you after I've had my supper," and he drew aside the reed-curtain and went into the kitchen.

Niimi heard Hozumi's manly young voice telling them in the kitchen how rough the sea was, and then he went out to go to the bath.

CHAPTER IV

The House of Niimi



IN the bathhouse Niimi unexpectedly met Yoshitaro Yoshida, who had worked for twenty years with his father's firm. Niimi thought that he was still with the firm, but he noticed that Yoshitaro did not greet him very warmly.

"The house ain't what it was," he said while he scrubbed himself, "since your father came to be mayor. Amo's got an attachment on the goods, and the wages ain't paid and the telephone's pledged."

There were many people in the bath, but Yoshitaro went on talking unconcernedly. However, the bath was so crowded that nobody lent an ear to what he was saying.

"Bonbon," he went on, "if you turn out like your father there'll be trouble,—spending his money on women and the office all cleared out. I told the master time and time again, but the master, he don't take any notice of what Yoshitaro says. I had no wages, I didn't, for four months. So I made a bargain with the master that he'd sell me a lighter, and I'm using it now. . . . Master Eiichi, if you don't put things right the firm of Niimi's done. The master, he's gone on that woman Umé he took out of the Gimpuro, and she's sticking to him. He's built a big house in the main street of Tokushima, so they say, and I guess madam in the country is troubled about it. But, Master Eiichi, your mother was a clever woman. If she'd been alive would the master have spent the money in the way he's done? Ah, she was a clever sort. Do you remember her, Master Eiichi? You're just the image of her,—such a pretty thing she was."

He went on chattering without giving Eiichi time to answer.

"And the old grandmother?" Eiichi asked.

"Gammer? She's getting old, so she gave up Niimi's and stops at home to look after the children. The wife died in

February. Murai's wife, she that's in the office now, she makes the money fly this way and that. Look at my old Gammer. She was twenty or thirty year at Niimi's. But Murai's missus, she's too pig-headed for her, so she got angry. She was looking after Master Masunori and Master Yoshinori up to July last, and then Murai's missus brought her two snotty brats along,—spoiled children they are,—and she gave the children's toys and cakes all to her own kids, so Gammer didn't get any peace of mind till July came and the two young masters were sent off to Awa. She was always talking of going back home, but she fretted what would become of the office if Murai's missus had her own way, so she kept putting off and putting off, although she wanted to come, till last February, when the wife died in labour, you know, so there wasn't nothing to do but to bring her home. Ay, ay, she's strong enough. Well, well, and how's your ailment, Bonbon? Are you well enough to go on studying, or have you finished your learning?"

He spoke with real sincerity. Niimi, as he learned of the tragedy overhanging his house, which he had not suspected or anticipated, began to tremble, and felt sympathy for Yoshitaro's hard lot.

"Thank you," he said. "I'm much better. I've been studying from September last year. Is your wife dead, Yoshi? I never heard a word about it. What a pity! But I'm awfully glad to hear your grandmother's so well. She was very kind to me."

"Yes, but you were ten when you went to your stepmother in the country and so you didn't give much trouble, but the two young masters were a sore burden to her. But they soon grew up. Master Masunori went to the Middle School this year and Master Yoshinori's going next year, they say. That youngest one was born in the year your mother died,—on January 2nd, wasn't it? Yes, yes, your elder sister was born on January 2nd too, and that would make Yoshinori twelve this year, or is it thirteen?"

"His exact age is thirteen, but counting from the years since he was born he's fourteen, I think."

"That would be it. How quick time goes. You can get into the Middle School when you're twelve, can't you? I wonder why Master Yoshinori hasn't gone yet."

"Oh, we've made a mistake. His age by years is thirteen, I expect."

"Yes, but your father could get him into the Middle School even then."

Just then Hozumi came in.

"Ah, Yoshi," he said, "what a long time it is since we've met. Where have you been lately?"

"I ain't been anywhere regular. I've been to Shingu the last three or four days. How's the office, Toyokichi, these times?"

"Awfully bad. There's plenty of cargo to handle, but Murai's missus is such a nuisance we can't stand her. Yesterday at table she served a great big fish for Murai, and she gave me nothing but the bones. I threw 'em in the garden and she's still grumbling to-day about it."

"Give her a bit of your mind."

All three laughed at this. The bathhouse was now very crowded with the evening bathers.

"Toyokichi, they say you go to Shinkawa every evening these times. If ye go too much, ye'll get something bad."

"Don't talk nonsense, Yoshi. Do you think I've got so much money?"

"Ain't you and Hosokawa always going there?"

"Stop your joking. If I go there I go alone."

Hozumi was a tall, rather thin young man of twenty-three or twenty-four with a long, slightly browned face, a prominent nose and light eyebrows. His hair was cut short, but parted a little on the left and stuck down with pomade.

As Hozumi was getting out of the bath, Yoshitaro and Eiichi went into the dressing room.

"Bonbon," said Yoshitaro, while he was drying himself, "do you remember that time down on the beach, when you'd have died if I hadn't helped ye?"

"Yes, I remember it faintly. I remember my mother holding me in the kitchen in Shimagami-cho, and my being examined by the doctor."

"Ah, if I hadn't helped ye then, in another five minutes Bonbon would 've been dead, eh?"

"Yes."

"Ah, I feel how big you've grown when I think of that

time. You take after your mother, you do," and Yoshitaro put his head on one side meditatively as he looked at Eiichi.

Eiichi was standing in front of the glass parting his hair.

"What fine hair you've got," said Yoshitaro, and fell to praising him.

After leaving the bathhouse Eiichi wrote a letter to a friend in Tokyo and then tried to take a nap. He thought he must have just fallen asleep when Hozumi came to wake him up, and they went down to Hyogo pier. Hozumi was very much surprised to see him buy a third-class ticket, but Eiichi maintained silence and went on board the steamer.

As the voyage was very rough that evening almost all the third-class passengers were sick. Niimi, however, was not sick. He made the acquaintance of a washerman of Tokushima and found that he lived next door to his father's new house. In the morning, when he came up on deck, he discovered an apprentice of Izeki, the book-seller, who had become a stoker. They had neither of them forgotten each other.

"Master Niimi," said the youth, "there's ugly stories going round about your father. If you don't give him a piece o' your mind and get him to be straighter in his dealings, it's all up with him."

The youth's face and eyebrows were grimy, and his eyebrows were joined together with a frowning wrinkle.

"What sort of ugly stories?" Eiichi asked.

"They say that when the mouth of the river was blocked up the dredger was never sent to clear it, and day after day the ships were delayed in getting into Tokushima, so that at last they began to go to Komatsujima. That was in August last year, and they've been going there ever since. I can't tell you what the papers have been saying about him. And then the day before yesterday . . . you know they're making a new bridge at Tonda. The papers say that the mayor is getting something out of that."

The young man spoke bluntly. Niimi seemed to feel a cold shudder run through his body.

"How do you like being a stoker?" he asked. "Is it pleasant?"

"It ain't a question of being pleasant. I've got my mother to keep. If I don't get nine yen a month I can't do it."

"And how about the girls?" laughed Eiichi.

"I don't go with 'em, but the officers and the cabin boys, as soon as they get to Osaka, they're off after 'em. It's beyond telling how they go on. There's lots of the fellows on this boat up to their ears in debt." He added as an explanation, "That's because they work on the sea."

The stoker went down into the engine-room and Niimi was left alone on the deck to watch the dawn over the sea.

The wind was strong and huge clouds were racing across the sky from southwest to northeast, while the big steamer was pitching and rolling so that it seemed to be carried along on one big wave. To the east the horizon was distinguishable as a faint red line below the clouds, but the colour did not seem to grow in brightness however long one looked at it. Rain was threatening and the sea was one expanse of grey water,—a melancholy, lonely sight. The sun did not shine and the rain did not fall; there was only the sound of the waves and of the wind as it whistled through the masts and round the bridge with a mournful sound. Feverish as he was the wind felt piercingly cold. But he thought that if he went down below he would be sick, so he continued to walk the deck, repeating in a low voice a hymn he knew by heart. But anxiety as to what he was to do when he got back to Tokushima disturbed him. The thought of what he was to say to his father when he met him made him tremble.

"I don't know that I wouldn't have done better to stay in Tokyo and continue my studies," he thought. Then he decided that he did not want to stay in Tokyo pursuing endless studies. But what was he to do in an out-of-the-way place in the country? Everything seemed to him to have become worthless. Suppose he interested himself in the social improvement of the outcast class. He would get a brief notoriety in the papers under the heading of "Exemplary Work" and after that he would be forgotten again. No, it was useless. If he wrote books on philosophy the public would not read them, and that again would be heart-breaking. In his pessimism he condemned society as heartless. He was twenty-two years of age. What contribution could he make to society? None; and the ambitions which had filled him turned to bitterness. If his father would continue to pay his educational expenses he could make a special study of the-

ology and go abroad to Germany, which would be delightful. But he remembered his father's feeling towards him. For what reason were his stepmother, his father, and that woman called Umé so unkind to his little sister? The old proverb that life was like a boat floating on the sea did not appeal to him; life is like one of those tumbling billows, he thought. If one sprang up resolutely from the horizon the clouds would still be far away and heaven as far. By-and-by the wind might subside and one would have to be satisfied with the same old horizon. To carry his ideals and principles to his native place was a dream from which he would soon awaken. What was left might only be his corpse, —nothing left but to weep. His corpse? No, only the ashes. Even the ashes would not be left! The fine rain would fall on them and they would be carried away in some ditch. He felt suffocated.

But even if he was drifted like clouds and scattered like rain he must be resigned,—yes, even if the thunder sounded and the rain fell in torrents or if a hurricane arose suddenly and sent him down to the bottom of the sea, together with the ship. “I would sink in peace,” he thought, and smiled.

The rain began to fall slightly; the clouds raced near the surface of the sea. Eiichi bowed his head and wiped away his tears.

CHAPTER V

Father and Son



A BOY in school uniform came out of the entrance to the house and, seeing Eiichi, cried, "Brother!" and ran back into the house. Eiichi had just arrived in a 'rikisha from Komatsujima, which the steamer had reached at six o'clock in the morning.

Eiichi had anticipated that his father's new house would be very splendid, but he could not help feeling surprised when he saw it. There was a sparkling, high grey wall round it, with panels of scorched cryptomeria wood let in below and on the top magnificent tiles, all with the family crest in bas-relief. In front there was a railing of camphor-wood with hexagonal posts. The gate was especially beautiful, being made of finely grained wood with a soft sheen on it. The paving in front of the gate was one large bluish stone, which extended right from the gate to the entrance of the house,—a very big stone indeed,—really a wonderful stone.

Eiichi got out of the 'rikisha and going up to the entrance opened the wicket. He heard the sound of a child's feet and a woman's pleasant laugh. Then he saw his younger brother Masunori—a white-faced youngster with slanting eyebrows and thin cheeks. "Welcome back, brother," he cried, and bowed.

Half hidden behind the screens he saw a woman. She also said "Welcome back" and bowed. Womanlike she was ashamed to be seen from the street.

"How do you do?" he answered casually, and paying the 'rikishaman he proceeded to take off his boots.

"Please come in," said the woman. "What a long time it is since I saw you last," and she showed him in.

"This woman must be Umé from the Gimpuro tea-house," thought Eiichi. "In that case I saw her for a moment four or five years ago when I stopped with my father at the Mizuya

Hotel." Nevertheless he was pleased with Umé's warm reception of him.

"Thank you," he said. "Is my father at home?"

"Yes, he's upstairs praying," answered the woman.

In response to the woman's invitation Eiichi went into the back room.

"Won't you take off your school uniform and put on one of your father's kimonos just for a time till your bag's unpacked?" said Umé, smiling. Her womanly kindness pleased Eiichi and he took off his clothes as she suggested. Umé felt his coat.

"Why, it's sopping," she said and laughed. "I'll get out a kimono," and she opened a chest of drawers.

Masunori, who had been looking on in silence while Eiichi took off his clothes, announced that he must go to school and went off after saying good-bye to his brother.

"Masunori is getting a big boy," said Eiichi.

"Yes, isn't he?" she replied, and she took out a *floss silk kimono* and a *crêpe girdle*.

While he was putting on the kimono Eiichi asked if his father had not come down yet.

"No, he's very slow," said Umé. "He prays for an hour every morning. Wouldn't you like to wash your face? It's covered with smuts. I'll get you some water. Yoshi, get your young master some water," and she took Eiichi's uniform and went along the verandah to the lavatory.

A voice said "Yes" from the kitchen and there was a sound of wooden clogs. Then a good-looking young woman of eighteen or nineteen came out and, taking the basin from the washstand, went to the well to fill it. There was the sound of a chain creaking as she let the bucket down into the well.

Eiichi had not had silk clothes on for years, but he did not feel uncomfortable. Umé came tripping along the verandah with a towel and a toothbrush and some toothpowder. Then she brought him a nickel soapbox. Eiichi brushed his teeth and washed his face while the woman waited behind him.

"What nice hair you've got," she said. "It's really pretty. Many a woman would be glad of hair like that. Do you use any pomade? If you do I've got some in the lavatory."

"No, I don't use pomade or anything like that," he said. "It's vulgar, you know."

"Is it? Is it genteel to use no pomade?"

She asked the question with so much earnestness that Eiichi felt embarrassed.

"Refined people in America don't use it," he said, in defence of his statement.

This silenced her. When he had washed his face she gave him the towel.

"Was it very rough last night?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Would you like a looking-glass? Come into the dressing-room."

The dressing-room was next to the bathroom and there he followed her. Everything was in Japanese style. By the window there was a fine toilet-mirror. On the left there was a cupboard and in front of that a clothes-stand, on which there were some very fine clothes, which he supposed were his father's. Eiichi's wet clothes were also hanging there.

The woman took a comb out of the drawer of the toilet-mirror and asked him to use that, and then she brought him some pomade. "If you'll use it," she said. "It's your father's."

Umé's easy manners distressed Eiichi and the mention of his father gave him a shock.

While he was combing his hair she withdrew with the excuse that she must get breakfast ready, and went busily along the verandah towards the kitchen.

When Eiichi had finished arranging his hair he went out of the dressing-room. Umé put her head out of the kitchen.

"Have you finished?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. "I wonder if my father's down yet," and he went towards the kitchen.

"It seems as if he had finished. I don't hear him praying any more. But I've been so busy that I haven't had time to welcome you formally yet. Let me welcome you in the kitchen," and she knelt down on the floor. Eiichi also knelt down.

Umé began to go through the set phrases. "I have not had the pleasure of seeing you for a long time. I hope you have been well since we last met. I have been very remiss in my conduct towards you. Your father has shown great kindness to me. Allow me somehow to find favour in your sight."

Eiichi, although he felt somewhat embarrassed, responded:

"It is quite a long time since I last had the pleasure of seeing you. I hope you have been prosperous. I hope I may find equal favour in your sight," and he made the usual formal bows.

"Have you completed your studies?"

"No, they are not completed yet, but . . ."

"At any rate I am very pleased to see you back. Four years ago I had the pleasure of seeing you at the Mizuya." Umé said this without any exhibition of shame.

"Yes," said Eiichi. His overwrought nerves experienced a fresh shock.

"Your father has not seen you for a long time. He was saying only the other day that he wished to see you."

"Really," replied Eiichi with a passing smile. Such a remark might mean anything, he thought. Suddenly he remembered Emi.

"What has become of Emi?" he asked.

"She went into the country three days ago," replied Umé.

Just then Eiichi heard his father coming downstairs.

Umé rose up with an apology and went to open the door at the bottom of the stairs.

"The young master has returned," she cried, looking up the stairs.

His father came down without making any reply.

Eiichi hung his head and twisted his fingers nervously when he saw his father.

"Father," he said.

But his father merely said, "Oh, it's you, Eiichi, is it?" and went into the inner room.

Eiichi felt that there was something lacking in the greeting and hung his head.

A voice from the inner room said, "Just come in here."

Umé had opened the cupboard and was busy setting the table for breakfast.

Eiichi rose and went to the door of the inner room, where he sat with bowed head.

His father, who was dressed in a silk kimono and girdle, was sitting in front of the brazier. He was a short man of rather dark complexion, with a severe look on his clean-shaven face.

Umé's voice was heard from the kitchen. "Master, breakfast will soon be ready."

His father did not answer, but took a teacup from a small ebony shelf by the side of the brazier.

"Father, it is a long time since I saw you last," said Eiichi. "I hope you have been well," and he made a bow.

His father was ladling hot water from a big kettle into a small teapot.

"A long time, isn't it?" answered his father. "You look very pale. Have you been ill again?"

"Thank you. There has been no special change."

"How about the school? Have you graduated yet?"

"No."

"What's the matter? Have you a holiday then?"

"No."

"Well, what is it then?"

"There was something occurred to me."

"Have you been expelled from the school?"

"No."

Umé came to the door. "Will you have breakfast now?" she asked.

"Ah, let's have breakfast. We can talk things over at leisure when I come back from the office," and his father rose.

"Shall I bring it in here?" Umé asked.

"No, the kitchen's all right," answered his father.

Eiichi felt irritated with his father for taking things so casually, but sat silent with bowed head. On Umé calling him from the kitchen, however, he went in and sat at the place set for him.

"I expect Eiichi had a good tossing last night in the rough sea," said his father jestingly.

Eiichi only replied "Yes."

"What class did you travel?"

"Third."

"Really? That must have been very trying," said Umé.

"What sort of a school is that you've been going to?" asked his father.

"It's a Christian school," replied Eiichi.

"Have you become a Christian?"

"No."

"Well then, why did you go to a school like that,—against my wishes too? Have you left the school?"

"Yes, that was my intention when I came back. I have remained there till now because I approve of the principles of the school."

"Principles? Do you mean Christianity?"

"Philanthropic principles."

"Oh, I suppose you agree with the principles of Socialism then?"

His father was pressing him so hard with his questions that Eiichi was unable to appreciate even the special dishes of his native province which were set before him.

He began to answer, but his father pretended not to hear him and called for a second helping of rice. Umé summoned the servant to come in and serve. She was out in the garden putting up Masunori's lunch, but she came in when called and, kneeling down, bowed respectfully.

"Master, good morning."

"Um!"

"Mistress, good morning."

"Good morning."

"Young master, good morning. I beg to make your acquaintance and hope for your favour."

"Good morning. The pleasure is mine."

Meanwhile the master had been waiting to be served, and when the servant had finished her salutation she served him.

"Eiichi," said his father, while he watched the servant fill his bowl, "you were saying something about philanthropy. Is it idleness and neglect of duty? Empty reasoning and discussion may be all right for students, but what are you going to do now that you have left school? You talk about Socialism and philanthropy, but what use are they to you? It would be much better if you could think how you could earn a little money. Persons who act on principles exclusively always end up in poverty. I suppose you've got no use for the ————,* Eiichi, eh?"

His father concluded his attack on Eiichi quite calmly, but Eiichi thought the time was inopportune for saying anything in reply and was silent.

"I thought at first of not paying your school fees because you had disobeyed me in entering a Christian school," continued his father, "but then I took pity on you and sent the money up to

* The blank is in the original. Apparently the reference is to the Emperor.

last month. I'm rather pressed for ready money just now, so I didn't send this month's fees. As you wouldn't study what I wanted you to, and had become a Christian and wouldn't want to have anything to do with us, I thought it was useless taking any further trouble. That's why I didn't send any money this month. But, Eiichi, what do you mean to do now that you have come back? I don't want a Christian or a Socialist in my house. I'm not going to keep you in idleness. If you won't do what I tell you, then you're no child of mine. If you don't like living in the country it's better that you shouldn't stay here."

His father pressed home his arguments in a low voice, with frequent pauses. Umé sat listening in silence, and Eiichi also listened in silence. A deadly coldness oppressed his heart, but involuntarily he gave a slight laugh. Almost before the laugh was out his father was storming at him.

"Eiichi, do you dare to laugh in the face of your father, you insolent boy?" he cried, darting an angry look at Eiichi.

"Master! Please be quiet, master," said Umé. "It isn't right to say such things to him when he's only just come back," and she tried to soothe him with a sympathising look on her face.

"Insolence! After helping him to study in Tokyo I get such insolence for my pains. To treat his father in that manner!"

"Master," said Umé, "breakfast is a little late this morning. Wouldn't it be better to put off the talk till afterwards? You'll be late if you don't finish your breakfast."

Eiichi could not help thinking that his father was acting a part. He had often seen the part of the stubborn parent played at the theatre and had thought that there was no such thing in real life. But here he actually was,—the stubborn parent, and his own parent, too! It was too funny for words.

"Because you have got a little learning you think you can ridicule your father."

Eiichi felt sobered by the remark.

His father then rose and walked into the back room.

"Here, get out my clothes," he said.

"Master, won't you have your breakfast?" asked Umé, but there was no answer.

"Your father's been very quick-tempered lately, so please don't be angry with him," said Umé as an apology to Eiichi.

"Oh, no, how could I be angry with him?" said Eiichi, without lifting his head. His eyes were filled with tears.

There was a voice from the back room. "What are you chattering about? Why don't you get out my things at once?"

"I'm coming," said Umé, and, agitated, she hastened into the dressing-room.

"Please have some more," said the servant, who had looked on bewildered, and she held out the tray for his cup.

Her voice was a pleasant one, but Eiichi only murmured, "No, thank you," and going to a corner of the kitchen he opened a door and went into the servant's room, where he threw himself down and gave way to tears.

The rain was still falling heavily.

Later, after his father had gone to his office, Umé spread a bed upstairs and kindly asked him if he would not like to lie down and have some sleep after his night's journey. So Eiichi went upstairs and slept.

He did not wake up till four o'clock in the afternoon. Three or four sparrows were chirping noisily when he opened his eyes and he drew back the screen a little to look outside. It was now raining very little and the sky was becoming clearer. The tiles on the roofs of the house were bathed in a yellow light. To the northwest, beyond a warehouse, he saw a two-storied house. There was a persimmon tree beside it and by the open window there was a young girl reading a book. She lifted her face for a moment and looked in his direction. "What a beautiful girl!" thought Eiichi, but he was overcome with shyness and closed the screen again. Then he fell into a muse which was soon disturbed by his father's voice below.

"Has my father come back so early?" he thought, and shivered.

At the evening meal Eiichi again took the place set for him. His father was indulging in his evening glass and as the drink took effect he began to dispute with Eiichi, while Umé and Masunori listened in silence. Eiichi found it impossible to remain silent. He could not allow his father to say irresponsible things to him when he was drunk.

"How many hundreds and thousands of yen have I spent on you," grumbled his father, "and now you're twenty-two or

twenty-three and what use are you? Don't you think it's shameful? You've got to give up reading books now and go into the office at Hyogo or somewhere to act as clerk or apprentice. How d'you like that? Can't you do that? If you can't I'm sorry for you. You're the sort of chap that goes up to Tokyo merely to idle away his time and have everything his own way, eh? What do you really mean to do? Have you any special idea?"

"Not at present, except that I'd like you to treat Emi better and to leave this large house, which only runs you into debt, and build a smaller house, and let me resume my studies."

Eiichi thought that he would rouse his father as much as he could by speaking out boldly.

"Ugh! Insolence! Whether I borrow money or not is my own business. I won't have any talk from a rascal like you. Study what you like. Haven't you had a fine time? First the Middle School, and then four or five years in Tokyo. Then, when your lungs took bad, I looked after you and sent you to the Bonin Islands, but I don't get one word of thanks. Here you are after all this time, and the first thing you say on meeting your father is that I don't treat Emi properly and that I don't love you. Ugh! Did you learn to be insolent in the Higher School? Is that Christianity? Then I suppose Christianity teaches children to be unfilial!"

"Christianity . . . a father who does not love his child and the husband who does not love one wife . . . That is what my father is like. . . ." Eiichi spoke coldly and firmly.

"Ugh! You! . . . You are not my child. I don't want a rascal like you in my house. I'm surprised how you can have forgotten all my past kindness. Am I so hateful to you?"

His father showed no sign of yielding and Eiichi began again.

"How many women has my father? . . . Truly my mother must be weeping in the grave. And then, with all the remarks being published in the papers, to go calmly to the Town Hall every day." Eiichi spoke very earnestly.

"Insolent! What are you prating about?" and his father jumped up and went over to Eiichi.

"You can say all sorts of insolent things if I let you, can't you?" he said. "Say it again."

His father was trembling and choking with anger.

"You are accused of taking bribes and yet you calmly continue to go to the Town Hall," replied Eiichi unmoved.

Almost before Eiichi had finished speaking his father had struck him on the face with his hand. The cup he had in his hand rolled on the table. Then his father kicked him and he fell over on his side. Seizing the fallen Eiichi by the collar of his kimono his father dragged him towards the house door.

Masunori and the maid and the manservant Kichisaburo looked on in silence, but Umé got up.

"Please don't do that, master," she said. "You might injure him and then there would be trouble." She was interfering merely for form's sake.

Eiichi made not the least resistance. His father threw open the door.

"Get out!" he said, and he kicked Eiichi out.

Then he shut the door with a bang and burst into tears.

Eiichi, outside the door, wept bitterly, but there was a strained smile on his face. Soon a thought came into his head. He went out through the wicket in the outer door round to the back and got into the dressing-room, where he put on his school uniform. Then he went back to the front entrance and put on his shabby boots, finally leaving the house without an umbrella.

Outside it was dark.

CHAPTER VI

His Stepmother's Home



WHERE was he going? He went west along the main street of Tokushima, turning to the left by the corner of the Town Hall, and across Tokushima Bridge. He took rather a roundabout way to Itano as he wanted to buy an umbrella in Tori-machi. The lamp at the police station was burning dimly. Miyai, the haberdasher, was just the same old Miyai. Eiichi peered in to see the time and there was the proprietor sitting by the brazier nodding. Eiichi thought he seemed to have grown a little bald. Tori-machi was just the same. Only Iseki, the bookseller, had moved from Omichi and had gone into a fine big shop. There also the master was dozing in the shop. Farther along the street had changed, however. The post office was at Sengoku's, and there was a fine new Christian church. He went into an umbrella shop kept by a dumb man and bought a cheap umbrella. Then he hurried on his way. It was raining a little now.

Farther along he came to a shrine and it reminded him of Bunyan, the beggar,—a very honest, lame beggar, who would take a copper instead of a nickel coin if he were offered both. "Please gi' me a penny, sir! Please gi' me a penny, mum!" he would cry cheerfully, as he walked along on his round, always exactly to time, and he got the money. It was said that he was rich, with savings of over a hundred yen. A man of about fifty, he used to sleep at the shrine as if he were the keeper of it. Eiichi wondered if Bunyan was still alive.

Thinking of Bunyan reminded Eiichi of Chiyo, another beggar from Omichi,—the idiot Chiyo, who was said to have borne a child to Shiokawa, a very proud and haughty beggar,—Chiyo, who went about from morning to night with a leer in her left eye and a strange laugh, calling after every one she met,

in a loud voice, "I don't like 'ee. Ye're funny." Sometimes she went about with her nose painted black; sometimes her face was plastered over with powder. Her kimono with its long sleeves was all torn, and she carried a filthy bag. Chiyo, who was always going about begging while she rubbed her close-cropped head! Eiichi recalled seeing her seven or eight years before one morning when he was taking a walk to Seimi, laughing and sweeping the floor of the gallery where the *ex voto* offerings were displayed.

Then there was "Sunday," another beggar. He also was an idiot, who went about with a box hanging round his neck on which was written "Sunday." But even if it was not Sunday, only Friday or Saturday, he still went out begging,—a tall beggar, apparently about forty years of age.

Shiokawa, to whom Chiyo was said to have borne a child, had died some years ago, he had heard, but the other three beggars were so celebrated in Tokushima that they were beloved both by the Mayor and all the citizens. Those three enjoyed their lives, he thought, free from all ambitions. Perhaps they were even then asleep dreaming innocent dreams.

With such thoughts he passed along. Ryuseido, the book-seller, he noticed, was gone; there was a "to let" notice pasted up; but Konishi's, the chemist and confectioner's, was still there as of old. The four-storied eating-house of Ichikawa had become three-storied. The usually lively Shinmachi Bridge was now deserted. The rain was getting into his left shoe.

There were no lights at the Kogawa Hospital. From Takimi Bridge he could see seven or eight lights on Taki Hill. The prison looked as big as ever. Passing over Maekawa Bridge he heard a rumbling sound, like that accompanying a trembling of the ground, and knew it was the cotton mill. Apparently even on rainy nights the machines were kept going. The Maekawa police station was in the same place. Then he came to the Hachiman shrine at Kamisuketo. Here he remembered, ten years before, seeing Suwanomori, the best wrestler in the province, at the village wrestling sports. His boot was beginning to get worse and worse. He thought of getting a pair of clogs, but decided to go on.

It was eight o'clock when he got to the Furukawa ferry. The river was here very wide and he had to pass over a long bridge,

where he felt very lonely and as if borne along by the wind. But the thought that he would be surely given a warm welcome in the country gave him a feeling of pleasure. His quarrel with his father seemed like a dream. When he got to the great pine-tree at Tai-no-hama he met a jinrikisha. Up to then he had met nobody. There were about five miles still to go and his tired legs continued to move. He passed through the cattle-pasture and came to Nakamura. Then there was a long field-path. He thought that if a robber stopped him he would hand over everything and then run naked all the way to Umazume. If he were killed that would be the end of him, that was all. So his dreamy meditations ran.

At last the fields were passed and he came to Kitamura. Then he descended the hill of Kitashitara and came to the place commonly called Shinden, on the opposite side of the river to his own village of Kodon, both being in Higashi Umazumé, Horiemura, Itano district.

He passed the grove surrounding the shrine of the tutelary deity and remembered when he was a boy how he used to beat the drum at the festival while the young men did the lion dance. This again reminded him that at the children's festival he had himself one year been the leader. He remembered that he and a lot of other children slept at the shrine and had great fun.

He passed over Ushiyajima Bridge. He remembered that one year, when he had just begun to go to the Middle School, a blue-jacket from Kuré and two girls who were in love with him had committed suicide together on this very spot because they had run through all their money. The river ran peacefully and the rain fell softly. From side to side the water stretched, a beautiful sight; and in the gloom brooding over the river he thought the ghosts of the three might appear. An uncanny feeling seized him.

Then he remembered that at the March festival the children all used to come to this river to play with boats,—how they used to get on a barge belonging to Yamaju and go out into the river to eat their dinners. He thought of his stepmother and of his sister's dolls'-festival. All the little girls in the neighbourhood used to come and see the dolls,—Tsuruko Tamiya also,—a pretty little bright-eyed girl, who made him feel shy when he spoke to her. "I wonder if she's married by now," he thought. He had

never heard what had become of her since he left for Tokyo.

Then, as his thoughts wandered from one subject to another, he came to the place where used to stand his old school, which he had attended for two years. Only four years before, when he had returned for a short holiday in the summer, the school was still standing. Now even the foundations had disappeared; all that was left was a stone wall. Where had the school been moved to? He thought with shame how proud he had been at the school of having been brought up in Kobé and how insolently he had behaved. Before he had passed the entrance examination to the Middle School he had taken part in a farewell entertainment to the graduates. He had subscribed thirty-five sen and they had gone to the Hamaguchi Inn and drunk saké * in a room upstairs. There were thirty graduates and five teachers, and they had all got drunk. Even the school servant, drinking by himself in a corner, had got drunk. When Eiichi remembered the servant a shudder ran through him. He was a man fond of drink, with a pale face and bloodshot eyes and rather long, shaggy hair, who was rather silent in his cups. He had a daughter who was eight years old, and in the summer holidays of the second year that Eiichi was attending the school, she suddenly died. All he knew at the time of the illness from which she died was that it began with the syllable "pleu," and a rumour was started that Eiichi had thrust her in the side with an umbrella and broken her third rib, from which she had died. When the rumour came to Eiichi's ears he was thunderstruck, as he was not concerned in the matter at all, and for two days and nights he lay sobbing out his heart under the mosquito-curtain in the back room. Finally he took five yen that he had saved and gave it to the girl's parents as a consolatum. He knew that he used to be so full of mischief that such rumours were easily started, but now the false impression made him indignant, because he also knew that even in his boyhood he had always been kind to others. He knew now that the girl, while working one of the irrigation wheels, had fallen and that this had resulted in pleurisy. Nothing was more painful than to be misconceived by others.

He came to the gate of Hara's, the soy brewer. Here he remembered that Tsuné, the round-eyed son of the cooper, had once asked him: "Didn't you kill the daughter of the school

* An intoxicant brewed from rice.

servant?" He was so surprised that he had run away. That was ten years ago, but he felt uneasy in thinking that the impression might still prevail in the village.

At the Kawaguchi common lodging-house, which was surrounded by a thicket, there used to be a tall, fat, white girl of about twenty. Where was she now, he wondered.

Going along the bank by the side of the *sakaki* trees he remembered that a cousin of his had once married a man in this place, but could not get on with the man's mother and so had got a divorce. There was the sickle still stuck in the yew tree as it used to be. Then he came to the hut of Tanekichi, the cooper, by the side of the river. His son, Tsunekichi, was clerk in Niimi's house at Umazumé. The next house was the hut of a beggar named Suké. A net was spread over the roof and he remembered that this had particularly attracted his attention when he was a little boy. Suké was the night-watchman at his house, and on the first and fifteenth of every month he used to come in at the back door and wait in front of the sink in the kitchen to receive the rice which he earned as night-watchman. There was a dim light on the bank of the river at Tamiya,—perhaps from the ferryman's house. He remembered that the ferryman had a sore-eyed youngster named Tatsu. As a rich man's son Eiichi had had many protégés and Tatsu was the first of them. At the New Year, when the children assembled for games, Tatsu always enlisted himself on Eiichi's side. Again, when swimming or playing hide-and-seek, Tatsu always followed him about. Swimming reminded him that he and Tsuruko Tamiya's elder brother used to compete in diving. Tokiyuki must have been fifteen or sixteen then, but they were great friends. Eiichi used to lend him magazines and be given big summer oranges in return.

Leaving Ushiyajima, Eiichi was at last in his own village district. Inside a thicket, close by the river, there was a place where they applied moxa to horses. From here for some distance there were no houses at all. On both sides, between the thickets, a large plain could be seen extending to the north. At the foot of Mount Kita, which was about two miles off, there was a township called Otani, on the outskirts of which was the place where the Emperor Tsuchimikado had been cremated. The lights visible along the mountain-pass here and there made him

feel lonely. He remembered how they used to warm themselves in the sun on the river bank when they were going to school in the winter.

Now he had arrived at the first hut of Higashi Umazumé, which was Masa's, the sawyer. Masa lived in this hut with a widow who had a child; Eiichi thought his name was Chobei. He was a rough, dirty boy, who took a daily delight in fighting. A little past this hut was the house of Genzaburo Ichibashi, who used to transact the indigo business of the firm of Niimi. Genzaburo had died while visiting the office of the firm at Kanazawa. Behind the house once stood the house of Kumazo Ichibashi, who had migrated to the Hokkaido while Eiichi was attending the Middle School. All that were left were the remains of the gate-posts and the black outline of a weather-beaten persimmon tree.

Next to Genzaburo's house was what was called the Higashi-no-Shintaku, which was said to have once been a large house and grounds. Now, inside the hedge, there was rather a small house. In front there was a thicket, and below the thicket there was a deep pool in the river, where an old man called "Nishira" used to catch fish. Eiichi was at last drawing near to his own house. Torakichi's house was at the bottom of the bank there, and next door was Masakichi's. Passing by the side of the water-gate he came out by Gonsuké's house,—Gonsuké, whose wife was said to be possessed by a badger. From there he could see the gate of his own house. Next door to Masakichi there used to live a man called Hei Bando, a tobacco-cutter. He wondered what he was doing now. Formerly there used to be a very large house there, belonging to Yamaju, a large landowner whom everybody in the neighbourhood knew. Now there was only left the main building and the garden had been turned into vegetable fields. As the children used to sing,

Tamiya has gold,
Yamaju has land,
But Kanai at the back there
Has daughters to command.

The Kanai of the song was the Niimi family, which was said to be noted for its beautiful girls.

Coming round from behind Nobu Saito's house he was sur-

prised to find no trace of Tamiya's house. Only at the north-west corner there was a big red pine, beaten by the rain and looking very lonely. Eiichi thought it very strange. "If there is no Tamiya in Higashi Umazumé, then there will be only marsh and moor and the cricket's cry." So ran the legend which had glorified the Tamiyas, and now there was not a trace of the house left. The road here turned to the right, round the Tamiya burial ground, which was surrounded by a yew hedge with a big nettle-tree in the middle, and then ran up to Niimi's gate.

The main stock of the Niimis, even in the time of the Tamiyas, had the biggest house and grounds in Higashi Umazumé, Morihai, Eiichi's grandfather, being Headman of eighteen villages. Being an enterprising man of strong character he had constructed two outhouses for fermenting indigo, one 150 feet by 30 feet, and the other, to the west, 75 feet by 25 feet. The bigger one was called the eastern outhouse and the smaller one the western outhouse. There was still another one in front of the western outhouse,—a high, two-storied building. There was a big gatehouse to the east of it.

It was now half-past nine. Eiichi stood quietly under the eaves of the gatehouse, all sorts of feelings rising in his mind. He knocked at the gate and listened to see if he could hear any movement in the house, but could only hear a horse stamping in the western outhouse. He waited a little time and then knocked again, when a door in the house was opened and he heard a woman's voice ask, "Who is there?"

It was certainly Emi's voice. Then he could hear another woman's voice and the two whispering together.

"It's me," answered Eiichi in a low voice.

"Who can it be at this time?" he heard Emi say, and then he heard the other girl's voice mingling with hers. Then at last he heard them walking along under the eaves of the outhouse, their clogs resounding as they walked. While Eiichi was wondering where the men were the side-door was opened. Again he heard a horse neighing and stamping with his hoofs in the outhouse.

"Is it brother, I wonder?" said Emi. "What has happened?"

The other young girl had hidden herself behind Emi.

"Aren't the clerks in?" asked Eiichi, going in.

"One's away because his wife is expecting a child and the other has gone on a pilgrimage and hasn't come back yet. I

was afraid, so I got Shidzu to come with me to open the door. It was good of you to come in all this rain. Really I wondered who it could be."

"I thought you were still at Tokushima, Emi," said Eiichi, looking at the other girl. "So you are back here already?"

"Master," said the other girl, "I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before. I am the younger sister of Tsunekichi," and she bowed.

"This is Shidzu, the younger sister of Tsunekichi," said Emi, introducing her.

Comparing her with his sister Eiichi found the servant by far the more beautiful. Although he could not see her well by the light of the small lantern she was carrying, he noted the clear outline of her face. She had finely arched eyebrows, and although her eyelids were not creased in the way that beauty demands, she had a very pleasant expression. Her complexion also was clear, and altogether she was of a prettiness that is rarely found in the country districts. Compared with the rusty-haired, dark-skinned Emi, who was a fat, strong girl, there was the difference between snow and charcoal.

Eiichi made the proper salutations in return, but she was too beautiful for him to look at without feeling shy. The three then went along under the eaves to the house, Emi and Shidzu chattering.

"I really wondered who it could be."

"It gave me quite a turn. Suppose it's a robber, I thought."

"How's mother?" asked Eiichi.

"She has a touch of rheumatism, they say."

"Since when?"

"About ten days ago. . . . They sent a messenger to Tokushima to call me and I came at once."

They hopped from under the eaves of the outhouse to the shelter of the eaves of the house, and then went up five or six stone steps to the entrance. (Houses in that district are all raised above the ground because the river Yoshino is generally in flood two or three times in August or September.)

At the entrance Eiichi asked where his stepmother was and was told she was in the back room, where he accordingly went.

His stepmother sat up when she heard that Eiichi had returned, and after they had exchanged the usual remarks about the weather

and his stepmother had inquired the reason of Eiichi's return, the talk drifted to the subject of the Tamiyas. His stepmother, fingering her chin, and occasionally putting back a stray hair, told the story.

"Really the world is very unfeeling. It has no pity whatever for any one who has become poor, whatever may have been their former position. While they were rich the Tamiyas were everybody. Everybody respected them. Now they are greatly to be pitied."

The stepmother had a small, white face, with narrow eyes and ugly eyelids. The lantern burned dimly.

"In the autumn of the year you came back, some time about the beginning of October, one morning five or six detectives were going about in front of Tamiya's house, here and there, and down by the dyke there was a police-inspector and two or three policemen. No sooner had they entered the house than Mr. Makoto was brought out and was taken across the ferry to Tokushima and put in prison. It gave me quite a turn. Mr. Makoto was Headman, you know, and whether it was losses in timber or losses in silk, or spending money on the girl at the eating-house next to the Village Office across the street, I don't know, but at any rate it was said that he had taken two or three thousand yen of the money of the Village Office. And then, before the case came into court, he hanged himself in his cell. It was very, very sad. His wife, when she heard of it, went out of her mind and jumped into the river and drowned herself. Really, I felt so sorry for her and it was so sad that I cried. Then, after the wife had drowned herself, they seized and pulled down the house, so there was nowhere for the grandparents and Tsuruko and Masa to go. From the New Year up to the Bon festival they lived here in the back rooms. They used the dressing-room as a kitchen and these two rooms to live in. However, in April Tsuruko's uncle or some one in Tokyo was appointed a teacher in the Tokushima Normal School, and Tsuruko went to his house to live. I think she graduated at the Girls' High School this year and is living in a house just back of ours in the city," and she asked Emi, who was sitting by her, where the house of Tamiya's relatives was.

"You can see the upper story from our upper story at the northwest corner," said Emi, watching her brother's face.

"Then, at the end of the Bon festival, the grandmother returned to her village, taking Masa with her. Tokiyuki, the eldest son, has gone to his relatives in Tokyo, I believe. Ah, how things change! Tamiya's house has gone and for a time I really felt quite lonely. But, Eiichi, Tamiya will not be the only one. Some day maybe we'll go down like Tamiya. I'm really greatly concerned about your father. Can't you speak to him a little?"

Eiichi fancied from what Emi had said that the beautiful girl he had seen from upstairs that afternoon must have been Tsuruko. If it was Tsuruko she had become very beautiful.

Eiichi did not say anything about his quarrel with his father, nor did he say anything to indicate his own misgivings.

"Has the second clerk gone on a pilgrimage?" he asked.

"Yes," said his stepmother. "Every year there's one goes from each village and this year the lot fell on us. As the first clerk's wife was expecting a child I couldn't send him, so I had to send the second clerk. It's nearly twenty-eight days since he started."

Eiichi had a vision of the manner in which the leisurely country folk go about calling on the names of their gods and being assisted on their way.

Through the falling rain there came the sound of the night-watchman.

"Suke's still employed as night-watchman, is he?" he asked.

"Yes, he's still here," was the answer.

"I'm very glad that your illness is not serious," said Eiichi.

"Thank you," she said. "It's only my right leg that I can't move freely. It's nothing to trouble about. I think it will soon be better."

The watchman had now come from the outhouse round to the back of the house, and heard them talking.

"The office door is not shut yet, miss," he called, showing how careful he was.

"There, Emi, he says the office door is not shut again."

"Oh, I forgot. I must have left it open when I was peeping out to see who was there," and Emi rose.

"Go and shut it at once," her stepmother commanded.

Emi ran along the verandah to the front.

"That child's so stupid I don't know what to do with her," complained her stepmother.

The rain was still falling heavily.

CHAPTER VII

Brother and Sister



“**H**OW brightly the sun’s shining!” said Eiichi. He was lying on his back on the verandah in front of the house.

It was half-past one in the afternoon. The rain of the previous day had passed away, the only trace of it being the still damp condition of the garden. To-day, from early morning, the sparkling sun had been shining and spring appeared to have returned at a bound.

The sun was too glaring for Eiichi to look at long, so he curled up his fingers and made a little hole through which he looked.

“What beautiful rays, like a rainbow!” Eiichi murmured to himself, as his thoughts began to wander. “How beautiful the sun’s rays are! And they have come ninety-three millions of miles! And these rays outside the air are purple, they say. What a beautiful world it must be! How mysterious light is!” he thought, and he pondered over many fancies.

But Eiichi, who was hardly able to bear the gloomy thoughts of the day before, still felt melancholy, even though the sun was shining. He even uttered a kind of imprecation.

He got up, but he could only sit and stare vacantly at the stepping-stones in the garden. Then suddenly a shudder of recollection went through him and he buried his face in his hands.

“Ah, hopeless, hopeless!” he cried. “God must have committed suicide.” With these wild words he descended into the garden.

At the southeast corner there was an ilex tree—rather a big one. All its green leaves were sparkling in the sun and sometimes they rustled and danced. To the left of it was a white camellia, but its leaves had fallen. By the side of it was a pine

and it also had withered. He remembered that tree well, because he had himself planted it in front of the bathroom. There were some other trees planted in front of a storehouse for clothing by the side of the bathroom and some more in the corner. Indeed, although the garden was not very big it was full of plants and trees.

Eiichi found some clogs and wandered here and there along the stone walks, sunk in thought. He had put on a woman's kimono, made of some hand-woven material, and his younger brother's girdle. His face was pale and his eyes glittered. Eiichi's musing generally took a fanciful turn.

"Why am I walking here?" he asked himself. "It is because I am alive. Why am I alive? I am alive because I am alive. No, it is because I don't want to die that I am alive. No, it's not that either. I want to commit suicide, but I don't want to go out into the utter darkness. That is why I go on living. I go on living, in fact, like one who has a rope tied round his neck by which he is being dragged along. I know that there is no value in life, but somehow there is a hand stronger than death which holds me by the throat and I go on living. . . . Life seems to me terrible. Life! And nowadays I have no appetite, and at every meal there is nothing but barley to eat,—stepmother is so sparing, even to stinginess. That's why I don't like the country. I hate it. It's not the place for a genius like me to live in. Town life seems better, though when you come to try it the poetry disappears. But to bury myself in the country is unendurable. But what should I preach in the city? Socialism? That seems about all I can do. Yet somehow I'm rather tired of Socialism. Socialism seems like a beggar's philosophy. Yet it's better than nationalism. As for philosophy, it only seems like a toy of the learned, and therefore I don't want to get fame that way. Yes, but to reconcile myself to the country and to settle down and work there till I die,—that's not amusing. Then it's — or Socialism. But preaching — in the city means of a certainty the prison dress. How strange! The world still has wars and Japan still has warships. How would it be to go to the city and flout this world of arms, taking the risk of the prison cell? . . . But I don't want to imitate Tolstoy or Chomei, the hermit. . . . Well then, the village school and the life of a teacher. But perhaps the old servant is there still, and

every time I saw his face I should tremble. . . . But how am I to earn my living in town?"

Thus his thoughts ran as he stood on one of the stones in the garden, gazing fixedly at his own shadow. The brighter the sun shone the clearer his shadow grew. But how pitiful that shadow looked!

The door of the room opened and Emi put her head out.

"Emi, when did that pine tree wither?" he asked.

"That one?" and Emi looked at the pine tree.

"Yes," said Eiichi, looking at it.

"Oh, that! Stepmother moved it and then it withered, you see."

"But I planted it in front of the bathroom, didn't I?" he asked discontentedly.

"She said we should all grow poor if a pine tree was planted to the southeast of the house, so in January this year she moved it."

Eiichi sat down on the edge of the verandah.

"I wonder if Tsunekichi has returned," he said. "It's two o'clock, isn't it?"

"Yes, it must be past two."

"Is dinner always so late as this?"

"Yes, always about this time. Usually people have it at half-past one, but that's 'cause they have five meals a day."

"I see."

"Brother, what sort of a place is Tokyo?"

"Oh, it's not much of a place."

"But I suppose it's larger and grander than Tokushima,—even than Kobé?"

"Tokushima?—Emi, how many months were you in Tokushima?"

"I was there less than a month and a half."

"Why did you go to Tokushima?"

"Why? I can't tell you."

"You can tell your own brother, can't you?"

"Well, stepmother. . . . I really can't tell you. There was some trouble."

Emi hung her head and Eiichi saw that there were some ashes on her hair. Probably they came from the big stove, which was stoked with straw.

"Emi, there ought to be nothing you can't tell me. Tell your brother, do."

"Stepmother scolded me and so I ran away to Tokushima."

"Why?"

"'Cause she's always hitting and beating me." Emi mumbled this with the end of her sleeve in her mouth.

"Stepmother is unreasonable, isn't she?" said Eiichi.

"You know I'm bad at sewing and she wants to know why I can't do it, and says if I'm so clumsy she'll send me down to the kitchen and have the servant up to do the sewing."

Emi hid her hands, which were chapped with kitchen work, and Eiichi's eyes filled with tears.

"What did you do at Tokushima?" he asked.

"Umé treated me as a servant."

"What, in our father's house?" and Eiichi turned away his face to hide his tears.

"Yes, she treated me very badly. I . . . I don't want to talk about it." Her voice choked.

"Why did you waste your time there?"

"But I didn't have no other place to go to."

"Wasn't there any servant in the house?"

"Yes, there was, but she left suddenly two days after I got there, and then there was another one came and she went away too. The one they've got now came three days before I left. Umé's such a scold."

"Emi, how old do you think Umé is? She makes herself look young, but . . ."

"She? She's thirty-two. I know 'cause she said next year's her unlucky year and she's anxious about it. Mother, you know, died when she was thirty-three, in her unlucky year. I wish she was alive,—or my sister, at least. There isn't a day passes that I don't wish mother was here. If she was alive I shouldn't be so unhappy . . . I could have gone to school a little more." She spoke regretfully.

Eiichi had never been very fond of his younger sister. She was not beautiful as her elder sister had been and she was not clever. Yet now the pity he felt for her made her very dear to him. She met her troubles with her stepmother with a woman's heart and he could not help admiring her.

"Emi," he said, "you mustn't let yourself get downhearted.

Your brother's not going to idle away his time always. Thinking about mother doesn't do any good. Try to be more cheerful."

"Yes, but I'm tired to death of it all. I never go to sleep at nights without a cry for mother. I look at mother's portrait and cry and cry and wish that if we weren't together she might be living somewhere. And then I think if I died too I might meet her. Besides, from spring last year I haven't been very well and I can't help feeling low. I got Yoshi, the servant, to get me some patent medicine secretly, and I don't know how many packets I took, but it didn't do me any good. I wanted to see a doctor, but I thought if I said anything they would scold me, and I hadn't got any money. So all June, July and August—three months—I was in bed, but there was no one to nurse me and stepmother said, 'Emi's sickness hasn't got a name. It's the crying sickness, that's all. If she'd pull herself together she'd soon get better. If I was her I wouldn't spend all my time in bed.' That's the nasty way she was talking from morning till night. I really thought I was going to die, but then I thought it wouldn't be right to leave you and father and so I sold my mother's keepsakes—the gold bar for her hair and the silk girdle, to get medicine so as to get better."

She told him this with many tears, and Eiichi's tears mingled with hers.

"Did father give you nothing at Tokushima?" Eiichi asked.

"When I came away Umé gave me an old neckerchief, that was all."

"But, Emi, where did you get that five yen from that you sent me?"

"I had that before from some dresses I sold."

"Dresses? How did you sell them?"

"You know Sei at Ushiyajima,—the old woman who sells dried fish. She helped me to sell them."

Some fowls were passing across the garden.

"Very cheap, I expect."

"It couldn't be helped. It was a matter of life or death." Emi dried her eyes with her sleeve.

"Did you sell any more of mother's keepsakes?" Eiichi asked. He did not like the idea of parting with the things left by his mother.

"Yes, I sold a lot of them."

Emi's sobs had now subsided and she was able to lift her face and meet her brother's gaze. She was very like her mother, especially her eyebrows and the shape of her nose and mouth. The resemblance to her mother made her dearer and more lovable. From her large eyes, with their black pupils, shone a warm womanly light.

"Brother, I think of you as my mother. Please be kind to me. I have only you to help me."

Emi hung her head again. Eiichi had been so long separated from his sister that he had no idea that she had been regarding him as her support, and he felt what a strange relationship that of brother and sister was. At a loss how to reply he remained silent.

"Brother!"

"Yes."

"Did father send you your school fees?"

"Yes, I received some."

"Were you put to any trouble? Father's built that grand house, you know, and he was in debt before. People often call for their money back, but father doesn't seem to care. I heard him say when he was talking about something that he was not going to send you your school fees any more. It gave me quite a turn. He gives Umé a hundred or two hundred yen at a time for her clothes and things, and yet he can't send you fifteen or twenty yen a month."

"Well, it's not worth talking about," said Eiichi, and he pretended to dismiss it as a matter of no importance.

"But he was angry 'cause you were going to a Christian school."

"Yes, I suppose so. But I'm too tired to be angry or sorry about anything," and Eiichi frowned.

Emi thought it strange, but was silent for a time.

"Brother," she began again, "have you quite got rid of your sickness? You look very pale."

"If I live comfortably and get good food my lungs will get well by themselves. But I'm not rich enough to take care of myself. Consumption and dyspepsia are rich men's diseases." Eiichi tried to laugh, and Emi also laughed and looked up at the sun.

"What beautiful weather it is to-day," she said.

Just then there was a sound of clogs at the gate and a man of about fifty came in.

"Oh, Hikokichi's come again," said Emi. "He's the Tenri preacher come because mother's sick. I'm not fit to be seen so I'll go in," and she went in and shut the screen. "My hair's so disorderly," she added from behind the screen, and Eiichi heard her receding footsteps.

Hikokichi came to the gate of the front garden.

"I was just wondering who it was," he said, "and it's the young master. I have not had the honour of seeing you for a long time. Please excuse my remissness since last we met. Bunzo has for a long time received many kindnesses from your house. It must be five or six years since I last had the honour of seeing you. I should hardly have known you, you have grown so. Really, if I had had the pleasure of meeting you in the street I should not have known you. I had the honour to hear that you had not been very well. May I ask how you are feeling?"

He bowed and clasped his hands together and put his head from side to side while he composedly uttered his formal compliments.

"The good lady of the house has been suffering from rheumatism and her health has not been good; but there is nothing to give any special cause for anxiety," he added kindly.

Tenri believers somehow seem different from other people. Eiichi returned the usual salutations.

"To-day, sir, the weather is exceedingly fine—really," and Hikokichi, looking from the camellia tree to the sun, sought for his tobacco pouch.

"Yes, it has certainly cleared up beautifully," said Eiichi. "Please sit down here."

"Thank you," answered Hikokichi, "this will do very well," and he sat down on a stone under the camellia tree.

"In Tokyo there are probably many remarkable things to be seen. May I ask when you arrived here?"

"Yesterday."

Somehow Eiichi felt so oppressed that even talking to Hikokichi was a trouble.

Hikokichi rubbed some tobacco in his fingers and commenced to fill a large pipe.

"I see that pine tree has withered," he remarked.

"Yes, it has withered," answered Eiichi shortly. Then he added, "I understand you are a believer in the Tenri religion?"

"Yes."

Eiichi smiled slightly. "Would you mind telling me what Tenri really is?" he asked.

"Well, sir, it would be impossible to tell you what Tenri is in a few words, it is such a wonderful religion," and Hikokichi knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

Eiichi's curiosity was aroused a little.

"Is there any reason why you should not tell me something about it?" he asked. "I hear a lot about Mother Miki. What kind of a person was she really?"

"Well, Miki Nakayama,—that is Michi-ya-hirome-koto-shiru-hime-no-mikoto, known to the world as Mother Miki, was the founder of Tenri." Hikokichi displayed a little diffidence as he said this.

"I see," said Eiichi. "And Miki Nakayama was born in the province of Yamato, I believe."

"Yes, at the village of Mimita, in the district of Yamabé, in Yamato."

"And I believe she died a long time ago?"

"No, she departed this life on the 26th of September in the year 1887. The origin of Tenri was this. Miki was very beautiful from her youth. At thirteen years of age she was already married to Zembei Nakayama of Mishima in the township of Tambaichi. This Zembei was a carpenter and the marriage took place on the 15th of September in the year 1810. They lived as husband and wife very happily and had one son and five daughters. But the time came when there was a great epidemic of the black pox, and five children of the house of Adachi, the town headman, who lived next door, all died, leaving only one child, the youngest. Miki was foster mother to this child, so she made every effort to keep the child from catching the disease, but as it also caught it it seemed that it too must die. Mother Miki, therefore, thought that there was nothing to be done but to pray unceasingly with all her strength to the gods and saints to save the life of the child, and strange to say her prayers were answered and the life of the child was spared. That is how the Tenri religion was started. But it would be impossible to recount all

the virtuous deeds of the great founder of the religion, so numerous were they. To the consumptive and the dyspeptic the Tenri religion has meant a renewal of life,—yes, to more than it would be possible to count.”

Hikokichi's thin lips became distended with pride as he talked, but somehow or other there seemed to Eiichi something base in it all, and he felt a vague distaste. Still, he remembered the case of Deborah, the prophetess, and he judged the greatness of the belief in Miki and her influence accordingly.

“What is the truth about believers selling their houses and lands and contributing all to the faith?” he asked.

“Well, Miki Nakayama, when she was forty years old, feeling that the teachings of Tenri must be earnestly propagated all over the world, decided to sell all her property and present the proceeds to the faith. This was the beginning of the practice of believers contributing all their property to the faith. At any rate it is a wonderful thing that pilgrims to the head temple in Yamato are not required to pay even a copper of their expenses. I myself for many years was suffering from jaundice, but thanks to Tenri I am now completely recovered, for which I am truly grateful.”

But his voice had grown hoarse while he was talking and he had to spit when he had finished. Eiichi regarded him compassionately. Hikokichi wiped his lips with his hand as though they had become dry and commenced to speak again.

“The head temple in Yamato is really magnificent. I made a pilgrimage there towards the end of last year, and really the Hongwanji temple at Kyoto, the Chionin, and others, are not to be compared with it. The great rice cake offered at the temple at the New Year is an enormous one, and when it is removed it has to be cut into pieces with great saws like they use in cutting lumber. And to everybody that goes they offer rice-cake stew. It's really a great affair, I assure you.”

A bee flew out of the fading camellias. Everything was still.

“Then it's a religion of universal brotherhood, I suppose,” said Eiichi.

“Mankind originated from the god and goddess, Izanagi and Izanami, as you know.”

Hikokichi stopped to spit again, erasing the spittle with his clog. His heavy eyelids were half closed and he was silent for

a time. Eiichi looked at him attentively. His face was pale and his hair was becoming grizzled. His clothes were dirty and there was a hole in his socks from which his toe-nail projected. His girdle was of cheap material, the colour of which had faded.

"Are Izanagi and Izanami two gods of the Tenri faith?" asked Eiichi.

"There are ten gods," replied Hikokichi, "but these ten gods proceeded from the sun and the moon, so that you may say that there are only two gods."

Hikokichi here heard the sound of feet near the gate and stood up to see who it was. It was Tsunekichi who had come back.

Eiichi remained staring fixedly at his feet.

"Ten gods? Who proceeded from two gods. . . . From the bride Meditation is born the child Fantasy, and the child Fantasy in turn becomes pregnant with gods. Then persons who talk about religion, ideality, and so on will certainly come to lose even their consciousness of self. Yes, but not to lose sight of self I have to concentrate it wholly at my feet. The feet are an objective reality. They must not be confused with ideas. Reality? At the feet the shadow of reality dances."

Thus his thoughts wandered on. His vision became dim,—form and colour became confused,—his mind stopped working,—time and shadow seemed to chase each other. A dragon-fly went past.

Hikokichi continued smoking. Tsunekichi, after looking round the gate to see if his young master was there, came into the garden.

"Halloa, is that you, Hikokichi? I was wondering who it was. Talking about Tenri again, eh?" and Tsunekichi began laughing.

"What's he talking about now he has come back?" said Hikokichi. "Tsunekichi seems to be a little off his head lately."

The three laughed, but Tsunekichi soon turned grave.

"Young master," he said, "the master and mistress present their compliments to you."

"Was your master in?"

"He returned at noon, when I had the honour of seeing him."

"What about the luggage?"

"The master told me to leave the luggage as he wanted you to return to town to-day without fail."

"He wanted me to go back? Yes? Thank you. I'm sorry to have given you so much trouble. Have you had your dinner?" Eiichi added kindly, although his heart sank.

"They were kind enough to give me my dinner in town."

"You always like to shove yourself in where you can get something good to eat, don't you, Tsuné," said Hikokichi. "Why didn't you stop in town till the evening and pick up something nice?" and he laughed while he prepared to light his pipe.

Tsunekichi stretched out his hand and knocked the matches out of the other's fingers.

"Save us, Lord God of Tenri," he mimicked, laughing, and then after asking Eiichi if he had any further orders, he went busily out through the garden gate.

Hikokichi picked up the matches.

"Tsuné's always up to tricks," he said. "He's a terrible chap."

"However powerful the gods of Tenri may be," said Eiichi, laughing, "they can't stop Tsuné's bad tricks, can they?"

"He can't leave off his tricks although he's the father of a family now. How old is he?"

"Thirty."

"He's young yet."

"Hikokichi," called Tsuné. He was standing clapping his hands together as if in prayer. "Deign to get rid of your property," he mimicked. "Borrow money and sell your fields, O Lord God of Tenri!" and he went off into a peal of derisive laughter as he disappeared in the direction of the western outhouse. The horse neighed on hearing the man bringing his feed.

Yoshinori now came back from school and thrust his head for a moment round the garden gate, just to announce his return, and then went into the house.

"The little master's growing quite big," said Hikokichi.

"Yes, he's getting a big boy," said Eiichi. "Would it be possible to get into town before dark?"

"Oh, yes, easily. The Sun God is still high yet."

"Then I'll start at once. Please go into the house, Mr. Hikokichi."

"Thank you," and the two went in.

There was a sound of singing from the western outhouse and a voice was heard—

How sleepy I am!
I could sleep my fill.
But with some one else
'Twould be better still.

The horse neighed.

CHAPTER VIII

Old Memories



WHEN Eiichi came to Tamiya it was ebbside and the banks of the river were uncovered.

Tatsu's father ferried him across, and while he was in the boat he asked about Tatsu and learned that he had died of dysentery. The father maintained a cheerful face as he told the story, but the news saddened Eiichi.

He got off at Shinden and went through a field of reeds, the property of his family. When he was a little boy, he remembered, he came one day to this field with girl companions to pull the young reeds. Tsuruko Tamiya came too and she was very industrious in pulling the reeds. When he had pulled thirty or forty he gave them all to Tsuruko and next day at school all the children made fun of him. On another day he discovered a lark's nest there, but next day when he went again to see it he found that some one had been there already and had crushed it.

Now, in the warmth of the spring, the reeds had burst out in all colours,—light brown, green, yellow, all mingling together very beautifully. You could hear the larks singing. About a mile beyond there was a very large dyke, and as far as that there were nothing but barley fields, where the barley was ripening well. Looking back, the dyke at Koden could be seen covered with undergrowth. Below it was the blue water running and above a large nettle tree, looking inexpressibly beautiful with its unfolding buds. In the direction of the upper reaches of the river Shiroyama at Tokushima could be clearly seen.

There were no boats visible on the river. On the Koden side the wind blowing across the light green reeds made them undulate like waves.

He came to the end of the reed field and then passed through some barley fields belonging to his family. Then he entered the

fields of Nishi-no-Shintaku. A lark was singing, its song sounding to him like the cry of a cicada. Then it descended somewhere and all was silent. At that he remembered that he was going to Tokushima, and the thought of what his father would say to him laid a heavy load upon his heart. Oh, that he could build a hut on this open moor and live there to his own contentment, nearer to God! But this moor, where the larks sang, was not all the world. Rural life was not the whole of life, and as he went along the field paths his thoughts grew busy.

Why should he feel afraid of his father's anger? Umé's persecution was nothing. He was a man, with the spirit of modern times in him. Completely to deny all authority and secure peace and equality,—that was his task; but for the sake of eternal peace and equality one should not relinquish fire and sword. "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." So cried Christ in his ardour.

But what of the old patriarchal system? Father? What was it? Christ said: "And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father, which is in heaven." That was what Christ said. What was father? And what authority?

While he was thinking of these things he climbed the dyke. It seemed to him fully thirty to forty feet high. This dyke, he remembered, had been broken by the floods when he was a little boy and had been rebuilt. The foundation was made of bluestone and in it were to be found small oblong yellow crystals. He and his playfellows had often gone there to get them.

Then he began to recall old times,—how they used to carve pieces of marble; how his elder sister had shut him up in the outhouse for being naughty and what he had done there; how he had fallen from a tree at the back of the house; how two dealers in indigo had come from Echizen and had enshrined the god Aizen in the alcove and had worshipped him; how Ichijiro Ichikawa, a strolling player, had come and enacted the part of Chobei Banzui-in in a booth at Ushiyajima, and how he and his companions had imitated him and had made a theatre between the eaves of Nishira's stable and Kanichi Ichibashi's outhouse. He smiled at this last recollection.

He remembered that he had secretly taken one of his elder sister's dresses and some powder and a looking-glass from the

dressing room, and how he had made himself up below the lattice window, which only let in a little light. However, he made himself up as a woman as well as he could and then went and waited on the stage they had devised, standing behind the straw curtain till it rose, which it did at last. But the others never appeared, and so he went back to the outhouse to tell Kanichi to hurry up. Kanichi had put his clothes on inside out and had rouged his face. When he had finished fastening his girdle he called to "Bonbon" to tell him to wait until he himself had appeared, and then he mounted on the stage and pretended that he was a servant running on an errand, repeating, "Essassa, essassa," in the way they do. All the little boys and girls who were watching commenced to laugh, and Eiichi thought that he would like to make them laugh too. He took one more peep in the looking-glass—he really thought that he looked very beautiful—and then, lifting the folds of his sister's long silk dress and with a downcast look, he came forth ever so sadly. His head, of course, was covered over—with Itchan's black apron—to make it look like a married woman's style of hairdressing. His appearance caused a great sensation, and he heard Tsuruko, who was behind, whisper to Sakaé Kawakami, "How beautiful he is!" This made him shy and he did not know what to do on the stage, but Kanichi, who was the servant, bound him up and kicked and bundled him off the stage behind. Then he thought that in the next scene he would be Kiyomasa Kato himself. While he was washing the powder off his face Tsuruko came in stealthily and said, "You were pretty as a woman just now." Then she shoved something into his dress,—a square piece of cardboard, and ran away saying, "Don't tell anybody." Kanichi had gone back to his house for a dress, and Itchan and Shinichan were mending the curtain, so that there was nobody to see it.

When Tsuruko got outside she shouted to Sakaé Kawakami, "I've just been to see Bonbon Niimi. He's got himself up as Kiyomasa Kato. Do look now." Then six or seven little girls all came into the outhouse chattering together, just as Kanichi, who had come back for his clothes, appeared with nothing on.

"Let's chuck it, Bonbon," he said. "My mother scolded me." So the theatre came to an end.

The thought that he had been made a pet of and praised by

Tsuruko and that he could not appear on the stage again, but had to stop in the middle of the performance, made his heart beat fast as he went home. He looked at the piece of cardboard that Tsuruko had given him and he found that it was a photograph of Suma. The time was just before the summer holidays and he was not able to make any further approaches to Tsuruko, for he spent the summer playing at the office at Hyogo. He knew nothing of sensual love and passion, but the enchanting dreams of adolescence were checked for a time. When he returned to the village in September the rumour that Tsuruko had been long-ing for "Bonbon's" return was so much talked about that he felt ashamed to see her. Then in April the following year he entered the Middle School, and, of course, after that they could not take any notice of each other.

Thinking of these matters somehow made Eiichi feel lonely. The thought that the beautiful girl he had seen the day before was Tsuruko herself sent a still stronger thrill through his heart.

Passing slowly through Kitashitara and coming to the village of Kitamura memories of the past again welled up,—how he had stolen sugar from the cupboard; how he had painted an old iron coin to make it look more valuable and passed it; how he had crammed bean flour, of which he was very fond, into a match-box, and, hiding himself behind the front outhouse, had filled his mouth with it; how he was scolded for buying and eating things in the street; how he stole some money and went to the end of the village, where there was a cheap sweetstuff shop, where he bought a lot of sweets shaped like pyramids.

Once he had spent the night at the temple of Daishi at Otani in company with the housewife of Nishira. That was in the summer and he was terribly bitten by the mosquitoes and could not sleep a wink. On that feast day he always received a few coppers, and Hatsu and Ichi and the little boy from Nishi-no-Shintaku and he always went to worship at the shrine of Kobo. In those days he owned as many as seven purses.

Then, in the summer night, there was the torchlight procession, when the men used to call out in a loud voice, "Sanemori is passing." At the end of the village they used to put out their torches according to the custom of that village. At Higashi-Umazumé the custom was not followed as it was at Otani in Yamaji every year. He used to look at it through the lattice of

the back parlour. Then at the beginning of autumn, when the world had become still and cool breezes were blowing over the rice fields, they could hear the drums of the lion-dancers, practising somewhere near Yamaji. Sometimes they were loud and sometimes they were low, but they were always sufficiently loud to reach the ears of sleepers. The small drums sounded with a sharpness almost enough to break the tympanum, and the big drums boomed incessantly,—a dreary, melancholy sound, that one could not fail to hear. He remembered that as a boy of twelve or thirteen he was afraid that they might be attacked and destroyed at any moment.

Also he remembered at the Bon festival the Jizo dance. They used to pile five or six benches one upon another in the yard of Ishikawa, the village official,—a man with a long smiling face,—and put a bamboo pole at each corner. Then they spread a curtain round, and while some beat the drum others danced to the rhythm. Most of the dancers wore straw coats and woven hats, but some were dressed in eccentric costumes. Frequently the leaders took popular pieces from the tenth part of the Chronicle of the Taiko or the third part of the Futaba War Chronicle. Masu from Nishira always played the samisen, seated on the platform with the young men who were the leaders. They began:

Oh, oh! The day is breaking
And the temple bell doth sound.

He himself once went on the stage after having some lessons from Masu's father, but he did not keep time with the samisen and his voice was too low, so he gave it up in the middle, only receiving a common fan as an award, with which he went home disappointed.

Many other recollections came to him of which he was ashamed.

When he got to Kitamura he took a jinrikisha, but it was past five o'clock when he got to his father's house at Tokushima. The city seemed somewhat noisy to him.

CHAPTER IX

At the Meeting House



FOR four days Eiichi had been a teacher at the elementary school. His father had been entrusted with important business on behalf of the Municipality and had gone up to Tokyo. In consequence they had had supper earlier than usual and Eiichi had gone out for a walk afterwards. It was a week since he had come back from Tokyo and the day was Saturday. There was a sprinkling of students in the streets, out for exercise, and Eiichi himself had been as far as Sako. Now the evening was drawing in and he was plodding along Higashishin-machi on his way home. When he came to the corner he saw a number of people standing under the eaves of a building from which he could hear the sound of a hymn.

Eiichi also stopped and peeped in. The building had a frontage of about twenty-four feet and was about thirty feet deep. On the mud floor there were placed a dozen benches which were filled with children. On the right, in front, against the clap-board wall, there was a clumsy staircase, and by the side of the staircase there were hung sheets of paper on which the hymns were written out. On the left there was a recess which was spread with mats, and in front of the recess there was a gangway about three feet wide, which was packed with little girls. In the middle there was a table covered with a white tablecloth, with a large reed-organ standing to the right. Above the organ was hanging a lamp with a rusty tin shade, and on the yellow plaster by the side there was an old map of Judea. The paper on the screens at the back of the room was brown with age and torn in places. On the left and right were thin pillars in the middle of the wall, sooty and worm-eaten, and to the pillar on the right was fixed a paper on which was written in clear handwriting: "Bible Class: Every Friday evening from seven o'clock at the Rev. Mr. Mackenzie's in Tokushima Hon-machi.

Sermon every Sunday morning at ten o'clock at the Tori-machi Church." On the right, in the corner at the end of the benches, there was a hot-potato-seller's handcart.

Everybody passing by peeped into the meeting-house and the first thing they saw was a beautiful young lady of about twenty, or perhaps eighteen or nineteen, teaching the children the hymns. Her hair was coiled in beautiful folds and she was wearing a purple skirt. Her eyes were large and black, with delicately folded lids, she had a deliciously chubby chin, and the beautiful crescent formed by her eyebrows was indescribable. With her rosy cheeks, she was indeed the picture of a simple country maiden.

Eiichi's heart whispered to him "It is Tsuruko," and, mingled with the crowd of curious people at the entrance, he continued to gaze.

The hymn had finished, and from the benches there arose a clamour from the boys. Their leader was a boy of some twelve or thirteen. His underlings, some five or six boys, were struggling for the seats. In a moment the leader had mounted to the gangway, driven the little girls off it, and installed himself there. His followers followed his example. Then from their midst a shrill voice cried.

Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,

and all the boys, thinking that a hymn was to be sung, began singing all at once in a loud voice. At the end they gave a yell and everybody laughed.

Then a man who was apparently the pastor stood up in front of the table. He was dressed in foreign clothes and appeared to be about fifty. His hair was slightly parted, and his drooping moustache hung over his wide mouth, the right corner of which was slightly contorted. He opened a small New Testament. The children were still making a noise.

"As I am going to talk to you," said the pastor, "I must ask the children to keep quiet."

He gave the order very politely, but the leader of the boys jumped up, and pulling down one corner of his mouth with one hand and imitating a moustache with the fingers of the other, he ran out. Immediately all the other children followed his

example and ran out. They were mocking the pastor. Once outside the children began to shout "Wry-mouth! Wry-mouth!" but suddenly one of the little girls discovered that Eiichi was standing there. "The new teacher! The new teacher!" she whispered, and in a moment they were all as quiet as mice. But it did not last long, and one by one the children soon made off.

The pastor finished his silent prayer. "We will now sing a hymn," he said, and began turning over the sheaf of hymns which hung by the side of the staircase. Finally he came upon the one he wanted and drew the attention of the extraordinarily beautiful girl to it. It began:

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

The girl, seating herself in front of the organ, began to play and sing. Eiichi was carried away by the sweetness of the hymn.

At the close of the hymn the girl seated herself on the other side of the table with bowed head, and the pastor began his sermon.

The crowd which had collected in front of the meeting-house began to melt away as the sermon progressed, until at last there were only left five people in the meeting-house. In front there was seated a short, married woman of about fifty years of age, whose red face seemed to indicate that she was fond of drink. She was dozing. Just behind her was the landlord of the building, the master of the Yoshida tailoring shop next door, holding in his arms a little girl of about three, who was fast asleep. He was sitting as if listening to the sermon. On the left, next to the wall, was seated a young man of about twenty-five, lame and pock-marked, dressed in a narrow-sleeved kimono and a white girdle. He was the caretaker of the meeting-house, and appeared full of piety, drawn, as it were, from heaven. When he shut his eyes it was to pray; when he opened them it was to fix them attentively on the lips of the pastor. On the next bench but two, next to the tailor, was sitting a young man of about twenty-one, rather neatly dressed in a narrow-sleeved kimono and a black girdle. His large clogs were as thin as a leaf and had

rope latches. He looked like a workman. The remaining person was Eiichi Niimi, who was seated behind the caretaker. He was dressed in Japanese dress and appeared to be somewhat agitated. Besides these there was Tsuruko, who was seated on the other side of the table listening to the pastor.

The pastor preached very earnestly. Sometimes he appeared to be addressing himself to the grave-looking workman; the next moment he had fixed his eyes on Eiichi and was preaching to him. Outside a jinrikishaman stopped and two or three people gathered. The pastor was earnestly telling the story of Jesus and Nicodemus, and his eyes were lit up by his fervour. The 'rikisha made a creaking sound as the 'rikishaman departed and at the noise Tsuruko lifted her head for a moment and looked out into the street.

The sermon was a long one, lasting an hour. When it was finished the girl took her place in front of the organ, and the married woman with a taste for drink opened her eyes and then abruptly rose and departed. Then came the concluding hymn:

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

Listening, Eiichi felt in his heart that he also had become a follower of Jesus. Tsuruko's thrilling voice pierced him to the heart and, rapt, he closed his eyes and listened to her voice. At the end of the hymn the pastor began a prayer, and Eiichi, with his eyes closed, began to revolve many things in his mind.

"Christ was taken to the very top of a pinnacle of the temple in the capital and told to throw himself down. As he did not he was a coward. If he had had the courage to jump down I would have knelt before him. But humanity has not the courage to fling itself down from the pinnacle and all is useless. If Christ had flung himself down the question of life would have been solved; it would have been settled for ever whether he was a man or not. Just because Christ did not fling himself down from the pinnacle the world is left in doubt. Even if it had been written that he did fling himself down and that the angels had held him up, people would probably have rejected it scornfully as a miracle. But still, if Christ was in any case to die on the

Cross, like the unhappy Euphorion, it would have been better for him to show humanity that it was to die. He left the world in doubt and mankind is discouraged. Our philosophers have lost their fervour and are asleep. Must we then call down the fire of Elijah—that which burns to eternity? We must take iron tongs and, seizing the mouths of the sleepy philosophers, pull out their long, soft tongues and press them with fearful strength between the red-hot tongs till their mouths are filled with salt blood and their jaws twitch and tingle and their spinal-cords are numbed. The nerve-centres of these visionary philosophers will then break, and what will be left will be only that nerve centre which produces a mathematical philosophy as hard as stones. Mankind must have fervour before philosophy will flourish. But it is useless. Since my return from Tokyo I am tired of life. I only wish to revile life.”

The prayer was finished, but the only two to say “Amen” were the caretaker and Tsuruko. The pastor put on his clogs quickly and came over to Eiichi.

“Excuse me,” he said, bowing, “have you attended Christian services before?”

“Yes,” answered Eiichi shortly, casting a glance at Tsuruko and again bowing his head, while he twisted his fingers nervously.

“Where did you attend?”

“When I was in Tokyo, a week ago.”

“In school?”

“Yes.”

“What school?”

“The Meiji Gakuin.”

“Oh, really! You went to the Meiji Gakuin? Then are you a believer?”

Tsuruko was coming towards them.

“No, I am not a believer yet, but . . .”

“Won’t you come and see me some time? My house is behind the church in Tori-machi. Excuse me, but where is your house?”

Tsuruko had now come up to the pastor.

“Mr. Hashimoto,” she said, “I must go now. Good evening,” and she made a polite bow as she prepared to depart.

“I will come with you, Miss Tamiya. Please wait a little. Are you in a hurry?”

"Oh, no," answered Tsuruko, and then she noticed that the lame caretaker had some trouble in shutting the large doors and she went to his help.

"My house is in Tokushima Hon-cho," said Eiichi.

"Whereabouts in Tokushima Hon-cho?"

"At Niimi's," he answered.

Mr. Hashimoto appeared not to realise that Eiichi was the son of the Mayor.

"Where did you say?" he asked. "Is it near the washer-man's?"

"It is next door," said Eiichi.

"Then you are the Mayor's . . ."

"Yes."

Tsuruko, who was waiting outside the door, heard the words "Niimi" and "Mayor" and peeped in. Then with a surprised voice she cried, "I—really . . . Really I'd forgotten you entirely. How rude you must have thought me," and she came in.

Tsuruko was not without a feeling that it was rather bold of her to bow to a handsome young man.

"Are you Mr. Niimi?" she asked. "How tall you've grown. I shouldn't have recognised you," and she laughed while she bowed.

"Ah, Tsuruko," said Eiichi, and he got up and bowed.

"How do you do?"

"How are you?"

"You know Mr. Niimi then, Miss Tamiya?" said the pastor, smiling.

"Yes, we lived in the same village, just behind each other, and were friends at the same school. . . . I am even distantly related to Mr. Niimi. . . . But I hadn't seen him for such a long time that I'd quite forgotten him. How tall you've grown!"

She spoke unaffectedly and with engaging charm.

"Haven't you seen each other for a long time?"

"Let's see, it must be nearly seven years, isn't it, Mr. Niimi?"

"Yes, something like seven years."

Walking together the three crossed over Shimmachi Bridge. The pastor left them at Tori-machi, and farther on Tsuruko and Eiichi, after an animated talk, separated and went home.

The evening air was chilly.

CHAPTER X

Love and Philosophy



THE door was shut; it was half-past nine. The Niimi family rose early and so went to bed early, and this evening, as the master was absent, they had gone to bed especially early. Eiichi had got in by routing out Kichisaburo, the servant, but the air in the house was so stuffy and there was such a smell of plaster that he felt he could hardly breathe. In the back room the lamp was burning; Umé was sleeping on one side and Masunori on the other. As it was half-past nine it was really half an hour after closing time, but Umé did not seem particularly cross about his being late.

Eiichi was excited by his meeting with Tsuruko and he determined to do some studying. A lamp! He must open the cupboard and get one out. But the door of that cupboard made an awful sound when you opened it and it would certainly wake Umé up. Half-past nine! Now for some study! He was sure to be scolded in the morning in any case.

He opened the door of the cupboard in the entrance very cautiously and took out a lamp. Matches! In the corner of the kitchen. He mustn't make a noise. But when he went to find the matches there were none, so he went into the back room and took the matches off the stand of the night-lamp.

When he turned to go upstairs he found that all the stairs were spread with brown paper to keep them clean. Muttering over such parsimony he began to go up, but the house was new, and the stairs groaned and creaked. "I'm only going upstairs to study," he thought, "so I don't care if they do make a row. There's really no need to be so careful about making a noise," and he began to go up boldly, at which the creaking increased, echoing all over the house till it seemed like an earthquake. "Ah, that's bad," he thought, but the farther he went the louder the stairs creaked. He expected that he would be scolded by Umé

and he listened attentively to hear if she was calling him. Sure enough, as he expected, at that moment he heard the shrill voice of Umé from down below.

"Who's that making such a noise going upstairs when people are sleeping?"

"It's my fault," thought Eiichi, "but it's rather cheeky of her to ask 'Who's that?' when she knows who it is."

"It's me," he answered quietly.

"Are you going up to study now?"

"Yes," he answered shortly. He went noisily up to the top, not caring what Umé said, and slid back the door of his study.

In the study also brown paper was spread over the mats, at which Eiichi was not a little surprised. Did Umé think that he had no æsthetic tastes? But never mind! . . . Ah, he had again forgotten to close the shutters when he went out. He was sure to be scolded in the morning. Was Tsuruko still studying, he wondered, and he slid back one of the shutters and looked out to the northwest. The shutters of the two-storied house were still open and he could see on the screens the reflection of the lamp and a black shadow which kept appearing and disappearing.

"That is a woman's shadow," he thought. "If one of the screens were open I could see her. What lovable creatures women are! I wish I could fly over there. . . . But I must study."

He pulled to the shutter with a bang and sat down in front of his desk. The oil in the lamp was low and the chimney had not been cleaned. Even Kichisaburo treated him with contempt, he thought angrily. The writing-box had been changed also. "It was done while I was out," he thought, and all the pleasure of his outing was gone. In those three hours his room had all been altered and the thought of those three hours became hateful to him.

But it was no use grumbling. He would try to write something in his "Meditations." His ideas were all at sea that evening, but he must get that question settled quickly. Was that some one speaking from down below? He had an impression that that beastly Umé was coming upstairs. Was he mistaken? Well, he would grind some ink. What sort of a brush was it? The point was worn out. Never mind! He must be patient and try and write something.

Eiichi took the brush and opened a notebook of about three hundred leaves. Then he wrote the heading, "Materialistic View of Noumenon. May 12th." The ink was thin and the letters blurred. Such cheap stuff! What was the use of such stuff even if you did get a big piece? The smallest fragment of Kobaien ink was preferable. Such persecution he suffered! . . . But he would endure it. . . . Yet how she did persecute him in everything! Impudent slut! So thinking he began to write:

"Great strides have been made in the study of electrical phenomena. In a recent paper there appeared a discussion of the shape of electrons. Perhaps in the near future the consciousness of man will be explained by means of the electron theory."

Hm! Was that a voice from downstairs? He didn't care if Umé did come upstairs. He would only go on studying. What did he care for her persecution? In his studies he was beyond either pessimism or optimism. He would develop his abilities. "What" does not involve the meaning of "for" or "and." To seek truth the wise man must be clear-headed. For himself colour and smell, tears and laughter, outline and shadow no longer existed: only the transparency of glass. He was not concerned with the dust and rubbish of the common people. . . .

But how beautiful and lovable Tsuruko was! And how much to be pitied for the transference of her brother to a post-office in Formosa! She would be sorry to part from her only brother, especially as he was going to the unhealthy climate of Formosa. He sympathised with them. Tsuruko had told him that as soon as the Girls' High School was opened she had entered it as a second year student. Now she was taking an extra course after graduating. . . . Now then.

"Even if there come such a time it will not be possible for the blind theory of mechanism to subdue the sense of design which is a part of the human consciousness. Nor will it be possible to prove that the mysterious interdependent ions which have appeared in time and space are the infinite noumenon which Kant called the *Ding an sich*."

The thought of Kant's phenomenalism and Hamilton's relativism made him shrink back as if cool water were being poured down the back of his neck. . . .

Tsuruko had been baptised last year, on the 21st of February,—blessed day! He had spoken to her a little about Socialism and

she had told him that she had read Isoö Abé's book on Switzerland and the life of Lassalle published by the Heiminsha. She was glad that he had attended the Meiji Gakuin, but she appeared to be a little disappointed when he said that he was not a believer. When she said, "Isn't it strange that both you and I should have inclined our ears to the words of Christ?" he had been not a little perturbed. Certainly Christ was a great teacher; certainly he was the world's most precious symbol of love. But the theory of cognition would not admit him; cognition does not know God. If the materialistic view of noumenon could prove that God, by his own power, had created the universe, then he would believe in Christ. Ah! he was indulging in dreams again.

"If we are conscious of noumenon the thing that makes us conscious of it is energy. That is plain. But to discuss the shape of electrons is merely a subjective fancy or hypothesis. One might suppose an ion to have a shape as an objective truth, but to realise this as an actual noumenon is not permitted by the latest psychology. Force may act blindly, but we must admit the development of our consciousness from that force. But all cognition being relative, if the mechanical theory were separated from the design theory we could not understand it. . . ."

Ah, he was tired of it! If he went on arguing in that way he shouldn't be surprised if he became a spiritualist. To go into the theory of cognition was too troublesome. He could not write any more; he hadn't enough energy to meditate any further on philosophy. Tsuruko had completely occupied his thoughts. But that was not the way to become a philosopher. If he was to make any contribution to Japanese philosophy he must bring himself into a more settled mood. Karl Marx said that now was the time for wise men to appear in the world and solve social problems from their very roots. Rather than prophets the world was seeking a new system of philosophy. . . . It was useless. Philosophy had been driven out by love. All the world's greatest philosophers had practised asceticism and celibacy, among others Christ, Buddha, Epictetus, Augustine, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Hume, Locke, Mill, Schopenhauer, as well as the Buddhists and many of the Christian saints. Why was it that he alone could not free himself from sensuality and grasp firmly the key that opened the intellect? . . . But which was most fundamental, the intellect or the senses? If philosophy was the most funda-

mental then flesh was the most holy part of philosophy. . . . He had already been captured by Tsuruko.

Sex did not require much explanation. Man was born of woman and begat women. He wanted to beget a child. Yes, he wanted to beget a child. Somehow or other he felt that love would be incomplete without a child. That was the first time in his life that he had thought of such a thing. What would be the sex of the child that he could beget, he wondered. Was not a child the finest of all artistic productions?—a plump, kicking child! Love! Reproduction! There was no need to write a book of six or seven hundred pages on the female sex like Koma-kichi Iga. Love! To live with a woman! That would solve every problem of philosophy. Tsuruko's parting "Good night" still lingered in his ears. His whole body was dissolved. He had never met any girls except servants and waitresses and milk-hall girls, and he had never had such a sensation as he felt when walking by the side of the beautiful Tsuruko. He felt as if he wanted to spring upon her suddenly, catch her in his arms and carry her away to the inmost recesses of the grove of Shiroyama, so yielding she seemed. At the least he would have liked to squeeze her hand at parting. But an inward voice had told him that true love was above all sensuality, and his hand had shrunk back. She was his divinity; he could not profane her. Besides, her honour kept him from stretching out his hand. . . . And yet he wanted to squeeze her hand. But to stand aloof from sensual pleasure? . . . What a wretched creature he was after all! Oh, if he could but get a glimpse of Tsuruko's face now! Oh, to sleep and think of her face in his dreams! How sleepy he was!

Eiichi stretched out his legs under the desk and lay on his back. Oh, how he wanted her! If some one would go and call her. . . . A thrill ran through him and he covered his face with his hands. Just then he suddenly heard a voice from the door say, "Brother, go to bed."

Eiichi sat up with an involuntary movement by the side of the desk and looked behind him; but Umé was not there. It was his imagination. He thought of reading again, but his head felt so heavy that his courage failed him. Again he lay down, murmuring, "Oh, how I want Tsuruko!" It would have been better not to have left her rather than suffer the torments of

desire. He looked from time to time towards the door lest he should be found by Umé lying there on his back, but Umé did not appear and for a time he conjured up Tsuruko,—her form and movements.

Then he heard a voice from the doorway, "Brother, you must go to bed."

He looked at the door and this time it was really Umé standing there in her dressing-gown. He sat up embarrassed, resting his elbows on the desk and hanging his head in silence.

"If you go to sleep like that," said Umé, "you'll upset the lamp on the desk with your feet and it'll be dreadful to have a fire while your father's away. That's why it's best to go to bed early and get up early. Please come downstairs and go to bed."

Set the place afire? What a fuss she makes, he thought; but he was silent.

"Brother, please go to bed."

Eiichi did not even lift his face.

"It's eleven o'clock already, really."

Eiichi did not move.

"Please go to bed," said Umé. She moved towards the staircase as if to go downstairs, but came back again.

"The paper spread on the mats, you know," she said, "is because the mats are new and the desk and the bookcase will make such marks on the mats that they'll be quite spoiled. So I got Kichisaburo to get the coverings out of the storehouse this evening and spread them on the mats. You didn't know because I didn't tell you, but if you're cross about the mats being covered up that's the reason. So don't be angry."

Hearing these excuses Eiichi turned his face a little towards Umé and looked at her attentively from head to foot.

"Brother, I'm going downstairs now. Please come down at once."

Again Umé turned to go downstairs, but instead opened the screen to see if the shutters were fastened.

"Kichisaburo shut them," she said, "as the young master had left them open after dark."

She looked hard at Eiichi's profile and Eiichi turned his face and darted a sharp look at her. Then with another "Go to bed" Umé turned to go downstairs. When she had got as far as

the door Eiichi gave a laugh. She thought he was laughing at her.

"What a nasty laugh you have," she said, and then she hesitated a moment thinking how she could take her revenge.

"Ain't you going downstairs?" she ventured. "I'm going to put the lamp out and take it downstairs, so you'd better go down first."

She received no answer.

"It ain't right of you to sit up late and risk setting fire to the place, and I'm going to put it out."

She spoke threateningly and going up to Eiichi blew out the lamp. Eiichi made no resistance. He jumped up and went downstairs to the inner room to sleep. In bed he fell to weeping.

CHAPTER XI

A Visit to the Slums



ON a Tuesday evening, three days later, Eiichi was standing idly outside the imposing gate of his father's house, hardly noticing the people passing along the street. He was not thinking of anything in particular, but just idling away the time, when his attention was suddenly attracted by two children who were running from the direction of Fukushima Bridge.

The first child was dressed in a ragged faded dress that had once been dark blue, with sandals on his feet as big as boats. His age was about ten or eleven and he looked a little ragamuffin. In his hand he carried an old figured towel in which there was some sort of grain. His girdle had come undone,—probably while he was running.

The child running after him had a respectable appearance and looked like a child of the middle classes. He was barefooted.

Eiichi noticed that the first boy was being teased by the boy running after him and thought that he would go and stop him. The two boys continued running up to the corner near Eiichi's house, when suddenly the boy that was running behind gave the little ragamuffin in front a push, causing what he was carrying to fly out of his hand and making him fall down on his face with a bang. His fall apparently did not make him cry, but when he saw the rice that he was carrying in the towel all scattered about he lifted up his voice and howled. The boy who had pushed him over appeared very proud of his feat, and giving a triumphant yell to a crowd of boys who were gathered far down the street, he ran back again.

Eiichi, smiling, drew near to the other boy, who was standing forlornly looking after the fleeing shadow of the bad boy and crying with anger.

"Don't cry, there's a good boy," said Eiichi; "don't cry," and he dusted the child's dress.

The boy watched until his tormentor had disappeared among the crowd of other boys and then commenced to gather up the rice, mixed with the sand and pebbles of the road, and put it into the towel which he had spread out on the ground. Then he sobbed out, "Won't my father be mad with me when I get home!"

Eiichi sympathetically helped the boy to gather up the rice, asking him at the same time where he lived. But although he asked him two or three times the boy did not answer. At length, after Eiichi had asked him four or five times the boy pointed with his chin and said "Over there," without explaining where "over there" was, adding with a sob, "Won't my father be mad with me when I get home!"

"Well then, shall I go with you?" said Eiichi.

But the boy grunted and shook his head.

"They'd be mad if I went with a stranger," he said in a low voice, as if talking to himself.

"Why?"

"'Coz," and the boy began to rake the scattered rice together quickly. Then, to show his rejection of Eiichi's help he jumped up and began to run away. But Eiichi caught hold of him.

"I'll go with you and explain it all," he said kindly.

But the boy continued to run on in silence. Eiichi overtook the boy again.

"I suppose your father will be angry with you for having spoiled the rice," he said. "Shall I go to your house and tell your father all about it and get him to forgive you? Don't cry any more."

The boy offered no further resistance to Eiichi's advances, but he still went on crying. Accommodating his pace to that of the boy Eiichi went along with him.

"Why did that other boy push you over?" he asked. "Who is he?"

"He lives at Iwaki's."

"What was the matter?"

The child tried to answer, but his sobs prevented him from speaking.

"Don't cry like that, there's a good boy," said Eiichi. "What was the matter?"

"I . . . I . . . When I went to buy some rice at the rice-

shop near Fukushima Bridge that boy and the others were all there, and he says, 'That's the fellow I saw begging down at the landing-stage,' and he slapped my face, and when I run away they all run after me, calling out 'Make him cry' . . ."

"Yes," said Eiichi. "What a bad boy!" and his eyes filled with tears as he thought how the ingenuous explanation of the boy showed all the cruelty of the children of the capitalists.

No more words passed between them. The evening was now drawing in and the crows on Shiroyama were silent. Guided by the boy he crossed Fukushima Bridge and, turning to the right, went about fifty yards till they came to a row of shops. There, between a clog shop and a potato-dealer's, was an obscure alley. As they went along this winding alley the stench of rotten pickles was at times unbearable; it was an indication to Eiichi that he was in the shadow of the slums. In truth he had happened upon a place that was beyond his imagination. The shadow of the boy trotting along in front became lost. It was a world the imagination had not pictured. The roofs were low and the tenements divided into such small sections that they seemed only about the size of the entrance of an ordinary house. "Is it necessary that people should live in such quarters?" he thought.

The houses were mostly dark, with their doors shut, and those that were lit up had at best only a tiny glass lamp, the generality having tin lamps with cotton wicks. As Eiichi was going along, looking on both sides, he heard a woman scolding in a shrill voice in the third house where there was a light.

"You young brat," she was saying, "I sent you on an errand to Fukushima Bridge and you stop out all this time . . ."

Then he heard the child being beaten and the sound of his voice crying. He stopped abruptly in front of the house, where he saw a woman of about thirty-four or thirty-five, stooping down lighting a fire in the grate. She had the tongs in her hand. Looking behind him he peeped into another house across the alley. It was full of smoke, but he made out on the opposite side of the grate, a girl of about eight or nine, and an old man, apparently suffering from disablement, who was lying with his face towards him.

"Such dotage and smoke," Eiichi thought. "May the day never come when I shall feel called upon to help an old man

like that! Yet they too wish to live," and he wrinkled his brows.

"Excuse me," he said, and the woman replied, "Please come in," apologising for the squalor of the place while she examined Eiichi sharply. From her tightly-bound hair, covered with flue, he thought she must be a spinner or weaver. Although she had asked him to come in, the sight of that old man lying about four feet behind him across the alley had given him a revulsion of feeling, and he felt inclined to go away and enjoy the sight of a beautiful face again. "Are the slums so wretched as this?" he thought. "If it were a young man lying sick there might still be some hope; but in the case of a dotard like that it is unspeakable," and Eiichi shuddered.

"Thank you," he said stiffly. He wanted to look again into the house behind him, but the thought of the old man lying there on the thin bedclothes made him afraid.

The woman spoke courteously to Eiichi. The boy was lying face downwards on the floor of the room, with his feet hanging down on the mud floor of the basement, which was some three feet below the level of the room. He was still holding the bundle of rice and crying.

"Ain't you going to give me the rice?" said the woman to him. "What are you lying there for? Stop that crying and look after the fire."

Eiichi thought that the time had come for an explanation and he entered.

"The truth is," he said, "I've come to ask you to forgive your little boy."

"Eh?" interrupted the woman sharply. "Has that boy been up to something bad again? He's so bad we don't know what to do with him. If he's done something bad I'll have to ask your pardon."

But she did not seem at all concerned, nor did her manner show any respect for Eiichi.

"Ain't you going to look after the fire?" she said to the boy, giving him a slap on the head and snatching the bundle from him.

"Won't you give me that bundle?" said Eiichi, seeing this. "I'll pay for the rice."

"What's it all about?" said the woman, and she opened the

bundle and looked at the rice by the light of the fire. She did not appear surprised to find the rice all mixed with sand and stones, but put it on a shelf and going up to the boy gave him another slap on the head which made him howl.

"Get over there and look after the fire," she stormed. "Father, the rice is all mixed with sand and stones. We won't be able to eat it to-night."

She looked over to a corner of the room while she said this, and then from the corner of the room there came a voice: "It's a poor place, sir, but won't you sit down."

A head was thrust out from the quilt for a moment, bowing to Eiichi.

Eiichi was startled. In this house, with a single room of nine feet by six feet and a basement of twelve feet by three feet, another person added to the two already there could hardly pass unnoticed. Certainly when he had gone in there had not appeared to be any man likely to be the boy's father, in spite of the boy's continual references to his father, but he had noticed some bedclothes in a corner and thought that they had been rolled together and left there by some one on rising in the morning. Now that a voice came from them his attention was attracted to them. This was certainly the father,—this man with the long hair, pale face and colourless lips, whose appearance disgusted Eiichi.

Eiichi stood at the entrance with one hand on the doorpost and one foot on tiptoe in hesitation.

"Thank you," he said. "Are you suffering from some illness?"

He asked the question kindly, and the father, who was gazing into the fire, turned and looked at him again.

"Well, it ain't exactly what you might call illness," said the man. "You see I was working on the railway up to March, but just at the beginning of that month, when I was at Kamoshima, my feet were crushed by an engine,—yes, and there ain't no hope of my ever standing again. So I've just got to spend my time doing nothing. Please sit down."

The woman returned to the fire and squatted down before it, and her husband's face was hidden in her shadow. The boy was still lying face downwards.

"Is that so? It must be very hard for you."

The woman turned round and looked at Eiichi.

"Really, master," she said, "I'm thoroughly tired of life. After my man had got crippled like that the railway throws him out with only twenty yen compensation, and we had no friends to go to to help us. I work from early morning till late at night winding spools for weaving, but though we live as sparing as can be, one woman, whatever she does, can't earn enough to feed two people. This evening he said that he'd like a little rice as he hadn't tasted any for so long, and so I sent the boy to buy half a quart of the cheapest rice, and that's how I'm served."

Her tone was one of infinite sorrow.

"I saw what happened," said Eiichi. "Your little boy did the errand all right, but when he was coming back a bad boy from somewhere or other shoved him from behind and made him fall, and so he spilt the rice. It wasn't the fault of your boy."

"Oh, that was it, was it? And so you kindly come, although you didn't know us, to tell us it wasn't the boy's fault? I don't know what to say to thank you. But the boy's a bad boy and not to be depended on. 'Go to school,' I say, but he won't go and we can't do anything with him."

"Why doesn't he like going to school?"

"Well, you see, it was in March, the day after the festival, I tell him, 'There's nothing to eat in the house to-day so you just get out and get what you can to eat.' I told him plain and drove him out. But in the afternoon he comes back crying like anything and says he's got a headache, so I puts him to bed. Well, the next day school begins again, but he says that he ain't going, and he don't go. You see his father never had a bit of learning and don't know one letter from another, which bothers him now, so he said he'd like the boy to go through the elementary school at least. So we send him to school, though we're very poor, till he got into the third standard. But there, when you're poor you can't bring your children up as you want to."

Here she began to blow up the fire, which was only smoking. From what the woman had said Eiichi guessed the meaning of the boy's confession. He was at a loss to know how to help them, however.

"He got as far as the third standard then?" he asked.

"Well, to go on with what I was telling you," said the

woman, "he got into the fourth standard, but no sooner had he got in than he gave it up. Really he's a year behind, 'cause I sent him out as a minder one year."

Eiichi was torn between two inclinations. One was to break away from this horrible place and throw philanthropic principles to the winds; to run back to his house with its beautiful mats and read philosophy. He heard an inward voice saying to him, "If you meddle in these matters in the end you yourself will be little removed from common." But at the same time there was another inward voice saying, "Kindness is the salt of life. The social organism demands a sacrifice for the sake of the living."

"I hope you won't mind my asking you where you live," said the woman.

"Where I live?" said Eiichi. "Oh, not very far from here . . . That boy of yours,—what's he doing now?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, he's not doing anything in particular. Sometimes he runs errands for his father and sometimes he helps me in the winding. You know the barber down on the other side of Fukushima Bridge. Well, he says 'Why not let him come here as apprentice?' and we thought of sending him there, you see. But then we didn't know whether he'd have patience to learn the business. But won't you sit down a bit instead of standing there?"

She lifted the lid of the pan to attend to the barley, which had begun boiling, and then took a pail and went outside,—probably to get some water.

Eiichi was thinking that he should like to get away from this gloomy quarter.

"The barber?" he said. "That would be good . . . I must be going now as I have some other business . . . so I'll take my leave. Please don't scold the boy after I've gone."

He said nothing more about paying for the rice.

"Thank you very much. Come and have a little talk another time, do—though it's a poor place to come to."

The woman said this while standing outside the door.

Eiichi looked towards the sick man. "Good-bye," he said. "Take care of your health." But inwardly he deprecated the meaningless hypocrisy of the remark.

"Thank you very much for your kindness. Good-bye. It's a poor place, sir, but if you could come sometimes for a talk . . ."

"Thank you. I will come again," said Eiichi.

Eiichi loved the poor in his inmost heart, but he thought that amid such surroundings a man must become stunted.

As he emerged from the alley it seemed to him like a dream. On Shiroyama a red light was burning,—the weather-signal. At the corner of Fukushima Honcho he met the servant Kichisaburo and they returned together, but Eiichi did not speak to him.

After supper, according to his promise, Eiichi went to call on Tsuruko.

CHAPTER XII

At the Gate



EIICHI was waiting quietly outside the gate of his father's house. He had again exceeded the time allowed for staying out. He had already knocked at the gate many times, but no one had opened it and he was tired out.

Stepping back to look along the street, the whole of Tokushima seemed to be asleep, which was quite natural since it was past twelve o'clock. He had been late three times since his return from Tokyo. Two days before, on Sunday evening, when he attended the meeting-house, he had got back just as Kichisaburo was going the rounds of the house to see that there was no danger of fire, and was about to shut the gate. Then, on the Saturday before, he was also late, so that this made the third time.

This evening he had a reason for being late. He had been to call on Tsuruko, for on Sunday, returning from the meeting-house, Tsuruko had told him that her brother Tokiyuki had come back, and had asked him to call and see him within the next few days.

Eiichi looked up at the sky and thought that the stars too appeared sleepy. That was because he was sleepy himself. He remembered that his father had said that he would not have the gate opened after nine o'clock, and his father had come back from Tokyo that evening. That was why he had taken the precaution of knocking softly on the gate. He thought that it would be a pity to disturb Kichisaburo in his slumbers, and as it was about eleven o'clock when he returned from Tsuruko's house, he had bethought himself and did not knock any more, but walked for an hour in the direction of Suketo Bridge. He had set out with the idea that he would punish himself by walking some fifteen or twenty miles there and back, but midway he had become tired. It occurred to him also that he would not like to appear on the morrow among the scholars with

sleepy eyes, and even if he did not give any lessons, he must not teach them to be heavy-eyed in the daytime. In spite of disturbing Kichisaburo, therefore, he went back to knock again. He must sleep, he thought; and, indeed, he was sleepy. Even the stars looked sleepy.

Eiichi drew near the gate and thought that he would knock just once more and see. He had just doubled up his fist to strike when the idea came into his head that every blow he gave on the door would be like a nail driven into his father's heart. The idea of arousing his father's anger, also, seemed to him like the torture of the crucifixion. He began even to dread the sound of his clogs on the paving stones, and sank down in a squatting position for a moment under the letter-box.

Why was it, he asked himself, that he felt such diffidence in the presence of his father? Why had he to crouch down in the shivering cold by the side of the gate of his own house? Had he not certainly the right to demand kindness from his own father? . . . But how kindly dear Tsuruko had received him that evening! Her brother was coming back from Muya, but he did not come, at which Eiichi was glad. The old lady and gentleman went to bed, and afterwards Tsuruko had taken him to her study. How happy he was! He knew the manners of present-day schoolgirls. But Tsuruko? . . . No, no. Moreover, if he once fell in love with Tsuruko, he would not care even if she were a careless schoolgirl. Tsuruko's circumstances prevented her from being thoughtless, however.

When they were talking about European history, seated by the side of her desk, he was surprised to find how their hands came together unconsciously. How delightful it was! Then the talk drifted to Tsuruko's past and they both wept. When she threw herself on his knees weeping he was ashamed and yet pleased.

Tsuruko had reason to be sad. It must be hard for her to act as servant to her adopted grandfather and grandmother. Women were of weak spirit. If her father and mother had not ended their lives in that way Tsuruko would not have been a bit different from other people. Probably she shrank back trembling when her friends began to talk about their lives. He himself experienced a shock when anybody was referred to as the son of a concubine. . . .

Tsuruko had become a Christian and had lost some of her friends. But the ladies of the church had kindly admitted her into their circle and she was not at all lonely, she said. That must be some comfort to her. He himself was fond of the society of such ladies, and he was pleased with Tsuruko because she had been admitted to their circle. In Japan it was not clear whether a wife was a servant or a mere child-bearer. But a woman who led a hard life bringing up a large family was certainly a gracious sight. The beautiful mixture of suffering and duty made her a lovable object.

He wished to love Tsuruko; he did love her. He dedicated himself wholly to the love of her . . . But how meaningless it was! He, who did not know the meaning of life, was in love. Was man an objectless creation? He must have an object, or of what purpose was his evolution? How meaningless was the theory of evolution! What evolution was there about their own lives? Chance! Ah, chance! Destiny!—Man had no authority to call these evolution. Man was merely adrift in the cold waters of the sea. In loving Tsuruko he was only drifting another foot. Life could be said to be objectless,—no, more than that,—to be blind. If he was asked whether he would rather die because life was objectless or love Tsuruko, then, of course, he would rather share Tsuruko's sorrows. But it would be meaningless for him to pretend to be a lover and to enjoy love. Love for him could only result in tears; the end could only be for them to die together, and then love would be ended. But what was love? . . .

Yes, but love like that evening's, which had come into existence so suddenly, as in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, was mere foolishness. Was love really like that? But Tsuruko had taken him prisoner; he had no will of his own left. He had never really expected to have such a beautiful sweetheart . . . But love, was it not all foolishness? Was he going to run love's long race for the sake of a passing pleasure? Spiritual love? It was merely the dream of some ballad-maker. Worthless!

He was tired of it,—tired of love. He had thought enough about it for the time. The idea was repulsive to him now. One moment's pleasure! Love was pain; and the awakening was agony. No, love was not for him; it made his head ache. To love a woman was, after all, nothing but to be greedy for

painful pleasure. Were wives only for breeding? That was meaningless,—to beget children merely for the sake of begetting children. They were to sleep with and embrace. But if one slept soundly, what need for beauty to sleep with? Buddha! The teaching of Hinayana! The extinction of individuality! Everything Nirvana! He himself nothing but a wave in the ocean! How he would like to plunge into the cool depths of the dark blue sea! Mankind! He was tired of it all. Ah, ah! He would like to bite his tongue till he died. To live was but to scent the odour of aristocracy, and he detested scents. He was a Socialist. Then Nirvana and death. Only this time for Socialism. . . .

He sprang to his feet and rained violent blows with his fist on the finely grained wood of that beautiful door till it seemed that the tiles would fall from the roof.

But there was no response. The world was asleep. Even the dead were asleep and would not rise up out of their graves. The world seemed passing from one sleep to another. He made another still more violent attack on the door, but still there was no answer. Looking up the stars seemed sullen. From the eaves of the house opposite first one sparrow and then another flew out and hid themselves under the eaves of a house five doors away. He had awakened the sparrows, he thought, but not his father. His sin was great. But the sins of the capitalists were greater because they had constructed houses with walls and gates which did not allow the people free access. The sins of the Christian priests were very great. They jabbered about "Rejoice in Christ!" While they were contentedly mixing up their traditional religion with sheer worldliness, aristocratism, capitalism, and robbery, was it likely that the kingdom of God would come? He could endure his agony no longer. Buddha! Nirvana! Fever! His tears were frozen. But he had too much courage to die. Let them beware. The glare of giants? The roar of lions? Yes, from now on it was revolution. He would attain his freedom. Let him be guaranteed eternal life; if not, then death. Tears of agony fell unconsciously. People might not know that the universe was awakening a revolt in his breast. While he was crouching there people in the slums of Fukushima, down by the waterside, were cursing God. Life's cruelty! Yet, in spite of all, he wished to live . . . Gentle as

he was he thought he had power to shake the stars from the heavens and to drive back the wide ocean. It was not for him to waste his time standing upon ceremony. Evil often had more wisdom than goodness. He must knock on the gate. It would be the tocsin of revolution. It would be a Buddhist revolution. . . . The essence of Buddhism was in the teaching of Hinayana; the Mahayana was like a slug that melted in the rain. Buddha's revolution was a failure. It started a fire in the future world, not in the present one. The Brahmin delusion was a good one, but as they did not deny the existence of separate Indian States they must be considered as foolish. The Japanese priests were even bigger fools. Mahayana! The Body of the Law! State religion! The Hongwanji! Even foolishness has a limit. They were engaged in licking the boots of the Government, when Buddha had taught them that life was a series of blind existence, finally ending in Nirvana. He would begin from now a great Buddhist revolution. The vulgar crowd would have no right to take part in it, but it would have a response in the spiritual world. Certainly there were not many people who knew that he was living in that small town of Tokushima, but how many people knew that Jesus was living in Nazareth? Revolution!

Eiichi's rebellious spirit made his whole body shake. Trembling he took off his right clog, his fist not giving a sufficiently resolute sound, and hammered at the door.

The door at the entrance opened with a rattle and Eiichi waited to see who it was that was going to open the gate. It was his father, with a candlestick in his hand. His father examined him attentively as he entered the gate, and then, without speaking, struck Eiichi a blow on the cheek with his fist.

Eiichi, choking, shut himself into his own room. There he sat, leaning on his desk and gazing vacantly into space while the tears fell. The fit of weeping soothed his spirit, but after a little time he grew tired of crying and, wiping away his tears, he looked up. There was a picture of Carlyle hanging on the wall, displaying his sullen face in profile. Eiichi thought of Sartor Resartus. He did not care for the weakness of the love-lorn school of philosophy of which Goethe was the type, but he could not help weeping over his own sad fate and the hell of capitalism. He himself, moreover, was merely digging in an

eternal void. Ah, that eternal void! What was there to fill the void? He was only a shadow, and had bad dreams. Life seemed to him like one of his dreams.

What a trouble everything was! His father had come into the Niimi house as an adopted son, and had abandoned his true wife for Eiichi's mother. Then when Eiichi's mother had died he had taken up with Umé. What a busy life he led! During that time he had become a member of the Diet, then a secretary in the House of Peers, and then he had left the Diet to become Mayor. Even after he became Mayor he continued busy. He had to build a new house, accept bribes, and humour Umé's whims. During that time also he must become supervisor of the Tokushima Railway, and that kept him still busier. Sometimes workmen got injured. . . . That poor labourer and his family of Tokushima Honcho! If his father had been careful while he was holding the post of supervisor of the line that terrible accident would not have happened. Should he take care of the people that his father neglected? Could he, even when at a loss to know what to do with his own life, become a comforter of the poor? Instantly! His body was on fire. For a moment he wished to drink deep to intoxication to escape his agony,—to clasp a woman and kiss her to death. Ah, for that moment, that instant! Dreams, dreams, all dreams!—Shadows!—Emptiness!

Thought-wearied, there came a kind of ecstatic smile on his face at the blindness of the world and his own vacuity. "The lotos blooms white in the mud." But that was a part of the uselessness and futility of life! It was merely an enigmatical perversion. . . . But how lovable Tsuruko was! Lovable? Very well, he would grasp reality and withdraw himself a moment in dreams of love. A moment's pleasure would suffice. If he disappeared, he disappeared; if he perished, he perished; if he were dashed to pieces, then he would be dashed to pieces and destroyed. Ah, how he would like to kill himself—kill himself again and again!

Ah, but Tsuruko, Tsuruko! Would she hide him in the mystery of love? Would she love him? She was lovable, beautiful, pure. And then, if she became his, she would rescue him. "Love me, love me," his spirit cried; "love me body and soul. I am mad at times now; if you do not love me I shall go completely

mad. I should be contented—quite contented—to go mad for your sake. All the world is mad, and if I became mad for your sake I should be the king of madmen. Love! I am suddenly imprisoned in the snares of love and I consent to my imprisonment. Love is madness, after all, and to get Tsuruko I will go mad. Oh, happiness! Nirvana! Woman is my God! My father's brute force! Can I accept such savagery? Yes, I too will adopt it. And yet, for my father to strike me in that way! But I will not think of it any more. No, I will not think of it. Only give me love! But I am weary of it all. . . ."

Weariness invited Eiichi to dreams. He stretched his legs under the desk and sank back to slumber. But a creaking sound caused him to open his eyes suddenly and there at the entrance was Umé again. She had come upon him unawares. His pulse quickened, but it could not be helped now. His head drooped and he leant on the desk.

"Your father says you have to go to bed, Master Eiichi," said Umé in a way that set his teeth on edge.

But Eiichi only replied "Thank you" in a gentle tone. He must go downstairs. Life, however he considered it, was less earnest than it looked. Must he sleep now? How useless was sleep! Sleep? What nonsense! Must they deprive him, awake and raving mad, of consciousness and life and shove him in the black folds of the bedclothes for a few hours? Well, he didn't care.

He got up and began to go downstairs.

"I don't think the shutters are shut upstairs," called Umé.

"She's got me there," thought Eiichi, and he went back across the room and began to shut the shutters. Tsuruko's room still had a faint light in it and the shadow on the screen was probably Tsuruko's. "What is she doing up so late?" he thought. At the sound of the shutters being shut Tsuruko also pushed back the screen and commenced to shut her shutters.

That moment filled Eiichi with happiness. He went downstairs to the entrance. Eiichi realised that he was mad. "I will be mad for a little time where nobody can see me," he thought. He was about to drag the bedclothes out of the cupboard, but stopped. "After all I am mad," he thought. "My father and Umé irritate me. Only when my father and Umé are sleeping can I stretch out my arms and legs. To-night I will not go to

bed, but try it,—not to-night merely but every night till I die. Till I die? No, I will not die.”

He threw himself down in the dark cupboard and composed himself for meditation.

Meditation? No, that was no use. It would only mean weariness, and on the morrow teaching would be a bore. No, he would go to sleep and then he might have a dream, even if only a faint one. There was no need to go into the inner room; he would sleep there.

So he laid his bedclothes down by the side of Kichisaburo and got into bed without taking off his clothes or putting on his nightgown. But the bed felt as comfortable as usual, and he thought that he would put on his nightgown after all. So he got up again and put it on, thinking that at any rate in bed he escaped all enemies. Sleep was the final salvation. Yes, sleep was better than love.

CHAPTER XIII

The Beggar Woman



EIICHI felt that the lack of sympathy between himself and his father had not been lessened by his father's reproaches and the blow that he had struck him. Besides, he had an unpleasant feeling that not only Umé, but his younger brother Masunori also despised him as a fool. Eiichi could not help feeling depressed when he saw his influence in the household reduced, even if he did not trouble himself about his foolish young brother accepting the opinions of others without knowing the circumstances. This isolation, however, only served to arouse his rebellious spirit and caused him to devote more time to reading and meditation. Also his thoughts turned increasingly on Tsuruko in dreams and in secret.

For some days his thoughts had been chiefly directed to the mechanical and the teleological theories of the universe, and during this time he had not once opened a book, as he thought that there was nothing authoritative to be gained from them. Even if there were, the course of study that he was pursuing made such deep inroads on his health that he felt that he had no time to waste on books. Eiichi's ill health, together with the pressure exercised upon him by his family, had effects upon him which may be easily conjectured.

Eiichi, it may be said, was hardly alive. Though still moving, his movements were desultory. When he had time he went to see Tsuruko or his younger sister in the country, and on Sundays he attended church. Otherwise it might be said that all his movements were purposeless and casual.

He had no special reason for going to church. It might be thought that it was to see Tsuruko play the organ, but that was not all. There were times when he did not think of Tsuruko at all. One reason was to see if the preaching of the pastor on

Christ could not arouse in his heart a fervour equal to that of Christ's. Another was that he had a peculiar fancy for crowded places, such as the station, or the theatre, or the school, or the church. Of such places he was very fond,—of studying people's faces and dress. Then, again, he was not happy at home and he had nowhere to go to amuse himself; so he just went to church to while the time away.

Eiichi did not go to church alone; he took his younger brother Masunori with him. He was of the opinion that the teaching of Christ was very good for children and women. Umé protested against the child being taken to church and his father got angry. The boy himself was puzzled. This also widened the breach between Eiichi and his father. Also his visits to his stepmother in the country were not regarded with favour by his father and Umé. In these circumstances any improvement in their relations became more and more difficult. Lately Eiichi had no longer joined his father at his meals.

One day Eiichi, coming back from school, noticed by the side of the gate a beggar's barrow in which was seated an ugly child of about eleven, who seemed from his attitude to be unable to stand. Eiichi went in at the gate, watched by the child, and was about to open the side gate to go through the garden into the house, when a beggar woman of about fifty-two or -three suddenly came out. Her back was bent and her head hanging forward, and she carried a bowl and some brown paper in her hand.

"I wanted some tea," she said, "but the good lady . . ."

Eiichi thought that the woman was rather bold, but then it was evident that she wanted something and if she wanted something he would give it to her.

"Halloa!" he said. "Do you want some tea? Come with me if you want some tea."

"Come with the young master? Thank'ee, thank'ee greatly. I asked the good lady, but she scolded me and said I ain't got no right to go through the side gate. The young master's kindness makes me weep."

Her head was covered with an old towel and her face was brown and pock-marked. She walked on tiptoe, with bent back, from the side gate round to the back kitchen entrance, her thin lips moving all the time in a ceaseless flow of talk. Of

course people must move their lips when they talk, but she moved them so unceasingly that her terrible fluency in speech was distressing. This beggar woman, who seemed like the beggar of romance, struck Eiichi with surprise.

He went into the kitchen to see if there was any hot water, but on looking round found that there was none. Then he went into the back room and brought out the kettle, as there was always a fire in the brazier there, with water boiling on it. When he came back he found the woman squatting down on the ground outside the door, and the maidservant, with her bulging switch of hair, who was sitting there engaged in needlework, staring at her in astonishment.

"Come in here," said Eiichi, going towards the beggar and standing on the step. "Come in and I'll give you some hot water."

"It's no place for me, your honour," she said, "it's no place for me," and do what he would she would not come in.

There being nothing else to do Eiichi put on some clogs and went out to the beggar, carrying the kettle. The beggar covered the bowl with the brown paper and held it up to receive the hot water.

"What a strange thing to do!" said Eiichi.

"It ain't right, your honour, to take your hot water in this dirty bowl; it ain't right," and he could not persuade her to remove the brown paper and let him put the hot water into the bowl direct. Certainly, he thought, this is the beggar of tradition, and although he felt rather foolish he poured the hot water on top of the brown paper and carried the kettle in. The beggar also went away.

Then it occurred to Eiichi that perhaps the beggar wanted some money,—that the asking for hot water was only a hint that she wanted money. If she wanted money she should have it,—as much as she wanted, and he went out quickly by the back way, round by the garden gate. There he had a surprise. The woman was sitting down on the ground by the side of the garden gate, and in front of her was a basket on which she had placed a small square piece of board. On the board was written:—

"This person wishes to return to her native place and begs for gifts to help her on her journey."

"I ain't worth your notice, your honour," said the beggar. "I weeps for your kindness, your honour."

"Do you want some money?" said Eiichi. "If you want some I'll give you this," and he took out a one-yen note from his bosom.

"Young master, did your honour say that you'd give this wandering beggar a yen? Thank ye kindly, thank ye kindly. Your honour brought out the kettle and gave me some hot water, and now your honour says ye'll give me a yen. I ain't worthy of it, I ain't worthy of it."

The beggar stood up suddenly, took the board and the basket, and went towards the barrow. Her appealing voice, which yet had something of doubt and surprise in it, as though she felt that she was being laughed at, made him think again that this was certainly the beggar of tradition. Her appearance was not attractive, but he did not wish to judge her by her appearance.

"Then take this," he said, and he went after her into the road and offered her a silver coin.

"I ain't worthy of your kindness, your honour. I weep for your kindness, your honour. Your honour said you'd give me a yen, but beggars of my sort, your honour, they never take so much."

She put the basket into the barrow, took hold of the handles and commenced to pull it along. But the child in the barrow pulled a very disappointed face, and seizing hold of one of the supports of the cover, commenced to shake it and to make a great fuss, evidently to make the woman take the money.

"Don't you want it?" said Eiichi, making a last effort to get her to take it. "You came begging, so isn't it right to take money when it's offered to you?"

The barrow stopped after it had gone two or three yards and the woman came back.

"I ain't worthy of your honour's kindness," said the woman, kneeling down on the ground and holding out the basket.

Eiichi was astonished at the woman's behaviour.

"It's only a trifle," he said, "but please take it," and he dropped the silver coin into the basket with a slight smile and went in at the gate. At heart he was dissatisfied with his charity, but he went up to his room with an unconcerned air and sat down

in front of his desk. "What shall I do now," he thought, and he took up a small looking-glass from the side of his desk and looked at himself. Was Tsuruko in love with that face? Yet it was a beautiful face, he told himself. If he met a woman with such a face he would fall in love with her himself.

Such thoughts as these ran through Eiichi's head as he looked at himself in the mirror. He had been examining himself thus for some time when he heard the voices of Kichisaburo and the beggar woman at the gate. "Is the beggar still there?" he thought, and listened attentively to hear what was being said.

The beggar was probably loth to abandon the idea of getting the one yen and was talking to Kichisaburo, the man servant, who had gone out at Umé's orders, just as Eiichi had gone in, to see if the beggar had gone.

"I ain't worthy of your honour's kindness," the beggar was saying, "only could ye let me see the young master again? If ye'd kindly let me set my poor old eyes on him again to thank him. He was very kind to this poor old wandering beggar," and she bowed again and again, her left hand almost touching the ground, and speaking ever so pitifully.

"What's it all about?" said Kichisaburo, looking down at the beggar. "You've got some money, ain't ye? Why don't you clear out? The young master's gone into the house."

"His honour says 'I'll give ye a yen,' but I says it ain't for the like of me to take it, although . . ."

"The young master said he'd give you a yen?—to a beggar like you? Nonsense! The young master here's not in his right senses, you know."

Nevertheless at heart Kichisaburo was rather surprised.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he went on. "Do you want to get that yen after all? I ain't going to be your messenger. You got some money, didn't you?"

"I told his honour I couldn't take the one yen. 'Then I'll give ye twenty sen,' his honour says, and his honour gives me twenty sen and I take it. But my child he says, 'Ain't we going home? How can we get home without money?' he says. 'We got to go begging from house to house,' he says. 'Why didn't you take the one yen?' he says. 'Ain't it the same whether we get the money at one house or a hundred?' he says. 'If we don't take the money when it's given us,' he says, 'shan't we

suffer for it afterwards?" he says. Ain't it possible for ye to get the young master to come out again just once?" and the beggar woman went on bowing.

"The young master's gone into the house," said Kichisaburo, and he set his left arm akimbo and looked up and down the street, hardly taking any notice of the beggar except to glance down at her now and then in a very haughty manner.

"I ain't worthy of it, but if I could just see the young master again . . . 'I'll give this beggar a yen,' he says. Please, Mr. Servingman, please call the young master again."

But Kichisaburo was engaged in looking along the street again. Just then he saw a very fine gentleman coming along, attired in a frock coat and carrying a stick. He realised that the master was returning and he began to use stronger measures to get rid of the beggar.

"You're always saying you're going to your own part of the country," he said, "and yet you've spent a good many days loitering about Tokushima. I know you. Ain't you been here a month? . . . And didn't you steal something the other day down by the Terajima ironworks and get kicked out by the workmen? You want too much, you do. You've had twenty sen. Ain't it enough? You've got something, so just you clear out. Talk about getting a yen, indeed! Get along! Get along!"

But before Kichisaburo had ended the beggar woman was down on her knees on the ground, bowing low. The master of the house, the Mayor of Tokushima, was approaching. Kichisaburo felt slightly confused. He wrinkled up the corners of his eyes, bared his projecting teeth, and smiled. Umé, who had opened the screens at the entrance and had been peeping out, now opened them wider and put her head out. His Worship the Mayor had at last arrived on the scene. Kichisaburo gave him a respectful greeting.

"What's the matter, Kichisaburo?" he asked.

"The young master gave her twenty sen and she has the cheek to take advantage of this and say she wants a yen and won't go away. This woman's got a bad character for doing that sort of thing. The other day she was stealing something down by the Terajima ironworks and got beaten by the workmen, she did."

"Is she crying?"

"I don't know whether she's crying or not. That's her way of getting money out of people."

The maidservant came out of the kitchen and stuck her head out of the garden gate to see what was going on. The master of the laundry next door also came out, and the wife of Mr. Tsunoda opposite opened the screen an inch to peep at the scene.

"Mother, mother, let's go," screamed the child in the barrow.

"Where do you think you are?" said Kichisaburo, who felt his authority strengthened by the presence of the Mayor. "This ain't no place for sleeping. Just take yourself off. If I finds you loitering about I'll call a policeman."

But the beggar woman showed no sign of moving.

"Get a couple of sen from the house and give it to her, Kichisaburo," said the Mayor, and walked in.

Kichisaburo addressed the master of the laundry next door.

"Fancy giving two sen to a thing like that!" he said.

The master of the laundry looked queer. "What's all the row about?" he asked.

"Why, the young master is so kind-hearted, you know, and this creature had the cheek to take advantage of him. Without meaning anything the young master showed her a yen, I suppose, and so she began saying, 'Give me that! Give me that!' She wants a lot, she does. And you see she'd already got twenty sen."

"Oh, twenty sen, eh?"

The Mayor had now gone and the maidservant brought out two sen in coppers.

"You're to give her this," she said, handing the coppers to Kichisaburo, "and send her away, and if she won't go then you're to call a policeman." She laid special stress on calling a policeman. Then seeing the laundryman, she greeted him and he returned the greeting.

"What's she been doing?" he asked.

"Well, you see, it's this way. She came in with a bowl and a piece of brown paper, and opened the side gate without saying as much as 'By your leave,' and came round to the back door and squatted down on the ground and asked for some tea. It gave me quite a turn, it did, but the mistress came out and told me to send her away, so I got her to go away, but the young master—he's so kind you know. . . ."

"Um!"

The maidservant was going on to tell all about it when Ume's voice was heard calling her from the entrance and she went in without even saying good-day to the laundryman.

The talkative Kichisaburo took the place of the maidservant.

"This creature, you know," he said, "she got a hiding from the workmen down at the Terajima ironworks the other day. They said she'd been stealing something. She's a bad lot."

"Hm!" answered the laundryman. "Hasn't this beggar been a long time in Tokushima? . . . The other day . . . Let me see, when was it? Some fifteen or twenty days ago, she was down at the western landing stage."

The beggar woman, by some impulse, jumped to her feet almost before the laundryman had finished.

"You wretch of a servingman," she said, "I'll serve you out,—telling everybody about me. I'll serve you out, see if I don't," and she walked off roughly to the barrow, where the child set up a howl.

At this frontal attack by the beggar, Kichisaburo was taken aback and could say nothing. His face got red and he was very much confused. He laughed nervously and looked at the laundryman. The laundryman also laughed constrainedly. Suddenly Kichisaburo remembered something and he ran after the barrow.

"Here," he said. "Here's two sen," and he threw them into the barrow and went back to the gate.

But the beggar woman, hardly before the wheels had made three revolutions, took the two sen out of the barrow.

"I didn't ask for this money," she cried, with a backward look, and therewith she threw it on the ground.

"Lor!" said Kichisaburo, on seeing this act of self-denial, "here's a beggar that won't take what's given her. Well, I am blowed," and he gave a laugh such as he would have given if a thorn had pricked his finger.

"What an extraordinary creature!" said the laundryman.

Eiichi, who had heard nearly all that had happened from the start, found something inconsistent in the beggar's behaviour and threw the mirror aside. While he was thinking vacantly he heard the servant downstairs saying, "The young master shouldn't have shown the yen to the beggar." He felt that he

wanted to say something in his own defence, and he was surprised at the complacency with which he regarded his act of kindness. Charity that was not thorough, he thought, was quite useless. He felt pity for the lot of beggars and tears rose instinctively in his eyes. Moreover, if he abandoned his father's house and led the life of a wandering beggar like a madman—absurd though the idea seemed considering his present position—he would experience a fate of that kind.

He went out on the top of the landing.

"Kichisaburo, has the beggar gone?" he asked.

"Yes, she's just turning the corner over there."

"The opposite corner?" said Eiichi, and he ran downstairs quickly and out at the entrance. His own clogs were not at the door, however, and he had to go round hastily to the back. His haste made Umé think that there was something the matter and she came out of the back room.

"Your father says you musn't give yen notes to beggars," she said.

But he rushed out at the gate without having heard her apparently. "Cruel! Cruel!" he thought. "Capitalism is cruel. Although Tolstoy decried charity out of his own experience, I will give all I have. If I give all then I shall have nothing left to give and, having nothing, charity will require nothing further of me. It is the fault of society. I don't care if the beggar is a cheat. I will give her money."

In this perturbed state of mind he ran after the beggar. He caught her up just on Fukushima Bridge, flung a one-yen note into the basket and ran off. The laundryman and Kichisaburo were still standing in front of the gate, so he did not go home, but turned off and walked along the street where Tsuruko lived. There he gave himself up to weeping with a grief which ordinary people would be unable to fathom; but the tears were comforting to his soul.

CHAPTER XIV

A Love Scene



EIICHI then went to call on Tsuruko and found her at home, but as she was busy in the kitchen she sent him upstairs into her study until she had finished. When she came upstairs he asked her where her grandmother was.

"Oh, grandpa and grandma are out to-day," she answered, "and I'm keeping house alone. It was very kind of you to come, but we shan't be able to see each other much longer like this. I have to go to Hiroshima at the end of June."

There was something of sorrow but also something of pride in her tone.

"Really? At the end of June?" said Eiichi. "Why, that's only another month."

"Yes," she replied, and placing a cushion by the side of her desk she asked him to sit down.

"And what are you going to do at Hiroshima?" he asked.

"Go to the kindergarten."

"Oh, to study?"

"Yes, the kindergarten training school."

"That will be nice. Children are such dear little things."

Suddenly Tsuruko, with a strange expression, began looking attentively at Eiichi's face.

"Have you been crying?" she asked. "What's the matter?"

At once glad and hurt at her discovery, Eiichi only answered "Yes."

"What's happened? Please do tell me, won't you?"

"Well, there's no harm in telling you, but . . ."

"Do tell me. Is it something that you'd rather not tell me?"

As she spoke Tsuruko slid back the screen in front of her and looked out into the garden, as she thought she heard a footstep.

But there was no one there, and shutting it again she turned to him with shining eyes.

"Won't you tell me? . . . If you loved me you would," she added, her spirit overflowing with courage.

Eiichi was melted by the word "love."

"Tsuruko, do you love me?" he asked, and he drew near to take her hand. "Shall I really open my heart to you?"

"Please do."

"Shall I?"

"Yes, please."

"Will you really listen to me?" and he gave a nervous laugh.

"Of course I will. Why shouldn't I?" and she kissed Eiichi's hand as she spoke.

Eiichi returned the kiss.

"Well, Tsuruko, I will tell you," he said. "And yet I'm so ashamed," and he hung his head. "Well, just now, I . . . Shall I tell you or not?"

"Please tell me. What was it? You haven't got even your usual spirits to-day. What happened just now?"

"I gave a yen to a beggar. It was thinking of that beggar that made me cry."

"Yes? That was very kind of you."

But Tsuruko did not seem particularly impressed. She only continued to gaze kindly into his eyes and to hold his hand more firmly, while her other hand also sought his. At first Eiichi was ashamed to meet the beautiful Tsuruko's gaze, and he lowered his eyes. But the fascination of her look was too strong for him, and his eyes again met hers. The more he looked at her the more beautiful she became, with her cheeks softer than silk and of the colour of roses. Why was she so beautiful? Entranced, the two gazed at each other in a delicious silence.

The vivacious Tsuruko was the first to break the silence.

"Is that all?" she asked. "Isn't there something else? Please tell me all."

"Well, Tsuruko, I . . . I don't think I shall stay long in my father's house."

"Why?"

"Well . . ."

"Why?"

Eiichi, with a strange hesitation, half womanish, half childish, sought to arouse her sympathies, and she, like a woman, sought to show herself sympathetic.

"You know, I suppose," he said, "about Umé and . . ."

"Oh, yes, I know. Your father's . . . What about her?"

"Well, when I see my father make a companion of a disreputable woman like that and grieve the heart of my step-mother, I can't bear it."

"Yes, but what do you mean to do about it?"

"That's what I'm troubled about."

"Please sit down."

"No, I'd rather stand."

"Well, let's stand then."

"I want my father to send away that woman. What do you think?"

"I think it would be better not."

"Why?"

"Well, you know they say that St. Augustine was led by his concubine to become a believer. Augustine thought of marrying a wife—a young wife—didn't he, and while he was consulting about it the woman whom he had as concubine said that even if Augustine forsook her she would not forsake him, and she concealed herself in Arabia. It was through this that Augustine became a pure saint. I was thinking of that. You can't imagine how much any one who has somebody to love feels at peace with the world. If Umé is turned out because she is a concubine then your father's feelings will be hurt and there is no knowing what may happen."

Tsuruko spoke with a great show of intelligence, and Eiichi, listening to the words of the woman he loved, could hardly contain his delight.

"But," he interposed. . . .

"I am a Christian," went on Tsuruko, "and I adhere strongly to the principle of one man, one wife. But even if the man I loved sinned with some woman I should never forsake him. I should forgive him and follow him even to hell itself to save him for Christ. Augustine himself said something like that. Again, I believe that if you really love some one it is not only one life that you will want to spend with him, but you will ardently desire to spend two or three lives with him and with

him alone. As for your father I don't think he goes with women merely out of love of it. If your father loves Umé," she said, "then all is right, I think."

"Do you think so? Is it possible that Platonic love can be realised in actual life? But, of course, if everything in this world was well ordered we might be able to realise the ideal of monogamy."

Eiichi murmured this in a low voice. But Tsuruko would not listen to his captious arguments.

Eiichi admired the depth of this bold judgment. Beautiful Tsuruko, for some reason, seemed to sparkle. Her eyes as she spoke looked larger and brighter. It was impossible not to praise her.

"Tsuruko," he said, "you have a big heart."

Tsuruko cast down her eyes under this praise and then again met his look.

"But I know how you feel," she said.

"Do you?" he said, and sudden tears welled into his eyes. "Ah, Tsuruko, I'm tired of this world."

"Why?"

"My father's conduct . . . Also I have become a riddle to myself."

"You? Are you tired of this world, even with me here?" and Tsuruko endearingly kissed Eiichi's cold, pale cheeks.

Unable to resist the tide of love, Eiichi clasped her in a close embrace.

"If the bottomless pit were to open for us now," he whispered, "I would not complain."

"Nor I," answered Tsuruko with a sob. Weeping, she whispered, "You are miserable, but I also am very unhappy. Look at my life, and you will see how much more fortunate you are than I am."

"Yes, it is true," said Eiichi. "My heart goes out to you. I feel as if I could die for you."

"Die for me? Oh, happiness! Shall we die together like this? Then we should soon reach heaven."

"Should we? Ah, but if to die means never to see Tsuruko again, I would rather endure all pain and sorrow and remain in this world."

"I, too," and Tsuruko's gaze was again fixed on Eiichi's beautiful eyes, while Eiichi devoured her with a look that almost seemed to pierce her bosom.

"Tsuruko," he repeated, "why are you so beautiful?" and again a delicious silence fell on them.

It was Tsuruko who spoke first.

"But what do you mean to do?" she asked.

"What am I going to do? I am going to start a revolution," laughed Eiichi.

"A revolution? What terrible things you say. Never mind. Do as you please. But never forget that the final victory is won by love and silence."

Eiichi listened to a sermon and kissed Tsuruko's lips as she finished speaking.

"Yes," he said gently, "perhaps it is so. But I don't want to imitate those whose minds are like a sheet of white paper. I want to put some colour on life."

"Yes, but truth demands that we should not force our will on other people, since we are not God. The way to control other people is first to control ourselves. I have been thinking about this a lot lately. When I think I am going to get sympathy and comfort from all the people at the church and from my grandfather and grandmother, I never get it, and I feel as if I could hardly bear it. I have had all sorts of trouble about my going to Hiroshima. Mrs. Taylor kindly took on herself all the burden of the school expenses, but there have been lots of things to worry about besides that. When you think that other people are going to take trouble about you it always ends in disappointment. And then you didn't come for about a week, and I stopped away from school for three days."

"Why?"

"Why? Because I was sick."

"What was the matter?"

"Oh, I only had a headache."

"What had you been doing?"

"I hadn't been doing anything but there was one trouble on top of another, and at last I took to my bed. My family thought I was old enough to be married, but my uncle thought I ought to go to a higher normal school. I thought of trying to get into

the Kobé College or the girls' college at Tokyo. It was awfully worrying. I thought if you came in while I was sick you might tell me something that would cheer me up. Why didn't you come?"

"Well, I was out at night too much, and my people thought it strange and my father got angry. You know that night that Tokoyuki didn't come back and we sat and talked so late,—my father was so angry that he struck me. I thought it was bad being out so much at night, so I left it off."

"What, that first night you came? How cruel! How cruel! Did he really strike you?—strike Eiichi, my dear Eiichi? Why? He ought to have struck me instead of you. Did he scold you for being late?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, why didn't you come back and stop at my house? They are all old people here and they would be glad to have you stop. The next time you are late do come back and stop at my house. My grandfather and grandmother are good old people, you know, and they would be glad if you stopped every night. . . . So you were struck by your father. The next time I'll really take your place."

"Tsuruko, were you absent from school three days? Three days?"

"Yes, I was in bed just three days. My head was bad. It was really very painful."

"What a pity I didn't come! Three days in bed? The next time you are sick I'll come and nurse you."

"Please do. I shall keep you to your promise. If you nursed me I should soon get better. By the way, how are your lungs?"

"My lungs? They're all right, I expect; but I'm told I must be careful with them."

"You speak of your illness as though it was somebody else's."

"Well, with this kind of illness you can't tell yourself."

"You promised to come and nurse me when I am sick, so the next time you are sick with your lungs or anything I'll hurry back and nurse you,—even from Hiroshima, I will. If you send me a telegram I'll come at once."

"Really? How delightful. Tsuruko for my nurse! Even if I were to die like Lazarus, if you were to come and bid me

arise I would come to life again at the first sound of your voice."

"Come to life? So if I were to die before you I should have to come back from the dead when you died."

"Yes, yes."

"Then who would call me back to life?"

"I would."

"So we should both have to come back to life together. And after that should we never die again?"

"If we died we could come back to life again."

"What funny things you say. And after that perhaps we should go to heaven. Let's go to heaven together."

"Will you show me the way?"

"Of course I will."

"'The woman-soul leadeth us upward and on.' Is that it?"

Thus the two, wandering in the mazes of love, passed from vision to vision and spent their time talking of the life to come until the dusk crept upon them unawares. In the twilight the grandmother returned and greeted Eiichi very kindly. She invited him to stop to supper and they talked after supper till about nine o'clock. Then, with a warm kiss for Tsuruko, Eiichi hastened back to his own house.

CHAPTER XV

In the Assembly Hall



THE Assembly had been thrown into confusion and was a scene of disorder. The President, in a hoarse voice, was calling repeatedly for silence, but in vain. Below the President's seat, Kokichi Enomoto, of the Citizens' Party, and Sontoku Masuda, of the Saturday Club, were quarrelling with each other. Enomoto, who was in charge of a post-office, was the leader of the Citizens' Party. In the centre, Tokihiko Honda, the Chief of the Engineering Section of the public works, and Haruji Kusumoto, called the "Moving-picture Showman," were engaged in fisticuffs with Inoué and Yuki of the Terajima Party, and Mitani, the Independent. Kusumoto represented the higher taxpayers in the Tomita licensed quarters, and was the rowdy of the Citizens' Party. His nickname of "Moving-picture Showman," it was said, was owing to the fact that his style of speaking was exactly that of a moving-picture showman. On the right of the President's chair, Hatakeyama, the Deputy Mayor, and Kitada, of the Saturday Club, had come into collision. To-day the Assembly was discussing what had been referred to in the papers recently—the light railway to the harbour and the old affair of the dredging of the River Tomita. The organ of the Saturday Club section of the National Party had been severely trouncing Mayor Niimi for his crafty dealings, and the public gallery was filled with auditors.

Eiichi also, partly to see how his father handled the Assembly, and partly to relieve the monotony of country life, had hidden himself in a corner of the gallery.

From the first it had been clear that there would be a scene in the Assembly. The year before an agreement had been made between the Citizens' Party and the Terajima Party in connection with a by-election to replace Mr. Hosoda, who belonged to

the Terajima Party. The agreement was that a member of the Terajima Party should certainly be elected to fill the vacancy. But this year, in February, on the eve of the by-election, the Citizens' Party had suddenly put up Shinsei Hanada, the superintendent of a geisha call-office in the Tomita licensed quarters, and canvassed for him so successfully, with the powerful influence of the Seiyukai Party to help them, that they had gained a victory. Since then the Terajima Party had been seizing every chance to annoy the Mayor, who belonged to the Citizens' Party. No matter whether the proposals made were good or bad, they were seized upon as an opportunity for opposing him. If any proposal was made in the Assembly by the Citizens' Party, instantly the Terajima Party ranged themselves in opposition without scruple, even saying openly that they opposed it because it came from the Citizens' Party. An extreme instance of this was the question of the light railway to the harbour. The Seiyukai followed its usual practical policy of boosting public works, by which all the members of the Assembly profited. Moreover, such public works always pleased the electors. But in the case of the light railway to the harbour the Seiyukai Party was not pleased.

The question had first been introduced into the Assembly by the lawyers' group,—that is by the Terajima Party. At the beginning the proposal to construct the light railway to the harbour was made with a view to its importance in increasing the prosperity of the city, and as it was a direct undertaking of Tokushima city, it was suggested that it would be as well to obtain Government assistance. To this, however, the Seiyukai Party was opposed, and the reason was this: The Seiyukai Party in Tokushima included many influential men, among them Mr. Niimi, the Mayor, and they thought that if they agreed to the proposal they would be robbed of most of the pickings by the proposers of the scheme,—that is, by the Terajima Party. On further study, however, the Seiyukai found that most of the landowners belonged to their party, and so they suddenly changed their minds and gave their consent to the proposal.

Again, among the leading spirits of the Assembly there was a feeling that, for some reason or other, the dredging of the River Tomita was neglected by the city authorities, and it was thought among the members of the Terajima Party that there was some

corruption at the back of it. One hundred and forty thousand yen had been spent on a dredger, and now, after only two or three years had elapsed, it was pronounced useless and kept tied up at Funedaiku Island, all owing, it was alleged, to the Mayor's incompetence. In the matter of ordering a new dredger, also, there was supposed to be some corruption going on. When the dredging of the River Tomita came up on the order of the day, therefore, Sontoku Masuda, of the Saturday Club, begged leave to ask a question.

"Mr. President," he said, "I wish to put a question to the Mayor personally in regard to the dredging affair. I desire that the Mayor should attend the Assembly."

The President announced that the Mayor was consulting with the members of the Diet on the dredging question and could not attend for the moment.

"Well then," said Masuda, "I will address my question to the Chief of the Engineering Section. I wish to have an explanation why the dredger, which only recently returned from being repaired at Osaka, is kept lying idle at Funedaiku Island."

The Chief of the Engineering Section rose to reply.

"The dredger is not lying idle," he said. "Every day she is dredging five to six hundred tons of sand, but such an old-fashioned contrivance cannot possibly dredge the bed of such a large river properly. If there is one day's rain the debris from the upper stream is brought down, and if we dredged thirty thousand tons, or even fifty thousand tons, our work would be rendered useless. We are powerless to overcome the inevitable workings of nature and are therefore obliged to abandon the idea of dredging the river."

The regretful tone in which he stated that they must abandon the idea made all the Assembly laugh.

Masuda then inquired why, if the idea of dredging the river was to be abandoned, the dredger was sent to be repaired. At this Honda, the Chief of the Engineering Section, put on an air of amusement at the member's ignorance.

"It was not on our application," he said, "nor on that of the Municipal Council, nor on that of the Municipal authorities. We had abandoned the idea of a harbour at Tokushima, but although we explained that it was impossible to proceed with the dredging of the River Tomita, all the members, of their

own accord, passed a resolution that the work should be continued, and so we were forced to accede. It is unreasonable to shift the responsibility on to us now."

This answer gave great offence to Masuda.

"There is no question of shifting the responsibility," he said. "I wish to ask why, if this was known, the Assembly was not warned of it earlier. I have never heard a word until to-day of Tokushima harbour being worthless."

Masuda was engaged in the transport business, and therefore was especially interested in the dredging question.

"But I explained to all the members that it was useless," replied Honda. "It would be well to listen to the advice of the experts on this question."

"I suppose you think that the Assembly is useless, eh?" called out Inoué, the lawyer, without rising from his seat and without asking the President's permission to speak.

"What are you jawing about, you bribe-taker?" roared Yuki.

"Call the Mayor, call the Mayor," shouted Mitani.

Hatakeyama, the Deputy Mayor, went hurriedly to the Mayor's room, while the attendant whispered something in the President's ear.

"Making fools of the Assembly," added Yuki, as if talking to himself.

"Make him apologise," shouted Inoué from his seat.

Eiichi, in his seat in the public gallery, was surprised to hear the angry shouts of the members. The newspaper reporters were all laughing together noisily at something, which made the President frown at them. They did not seem to care, however. Although only thirty-eight members were present they made noise enough for a club.

Inoué jumped up.

"Mr. President," he said, "Mr. Honda has insulted the Assembly by his remarks, and we demand an apology."

To this motion the majority of the members shouted "Hear, hear"—even those of the Seiyukai Party, just to annoy the Chief of the Engineering Section.

Then Kusumoto, the "Moving-picture Showman," thought it was time to rise to the support of Honda.

"There ain't anything to apologise for that I can see," he said.

"Shut up, Showman!"

"Get out, you whoremonger!"

There were cries of abuse from all over the Assembly. Kusumoto turned on Inoué.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

"It's none of your business, fellow," retorted Inoué.

"Who are you calling fellow?" shouted Kusumoto, and jumping up he advanced on Inoué.

"Mr. President," yelled Yuki, "an apology, an apology!"

"You fool," stammered Honda, "what do you mean?"

This made Yuki red in the face with anger.

"Fool?" he said. "Fellow, you call me fool,—you the bribe-taker?"

Honda, who had pretended up to now to be quite unmoved, grew pale with anger.

"Bribe-taker?" he cried. "Prove it. I won't stand such an insult."

"I called you a bribe-taker because you are one. Don't your conscience tell you so?"

"Fool!" And tears came into Honda's eyes.

"Who are you calling fool? It's you that's the fool, fellow."

The Deputy Mayor here came back, and Kitada of the Saturday Club left his seat and ran up to him.

"You must call the Mayor at once," he said. "What is Mr. Niimi doing?"

"Yes, he's coming directly. He's nearly finished consulting with the Diet members."

"But, Mr. Hatakeyama, you must make Honda apologise."

"Is it necessary that he should apologise?"

"That's what makes people call you bureaucrats,—talking like that."

Kusumoto had in the meanwhile caught hold of Inoué to fight him, and in a moment more had struck him a blow. Mitani and Yuki rushed up to join in the fray, while the other members looked on aghast. The Seiyukai members all made themselves as small as possible, especially the clean-shaven, short-sighted Hanada, who trembled and paled.

Masuda kept calling out "Mr. President! Mr. President!" and the President kept calling for the attendant. Apparently

he wanted him to summon the Mayor. Then Masuda went up to the President's seat and addressed him.

"I move that Kusumoto be handed over to the Disciplinary Committee," he said.

It had already become a question of discipline.

Then Kokichi Enomoto, the postmaster, who fancied himself as a supporter of the President, called out, "Discipline is of no use."

"Inoué began it," shouted the Seiyukai members, and there were cries of "Inoué must apologise. Inoué must apologise."

Then the Mayor came in, looking very dignified and authoritative, and seated himself on one of the extra seats. Eiichi was very much struck by his father's imposing appearance in the Assembly.

The members all became very quiet when the Mayor came in, and seemed to have forgotten all about discipline and the demand for an apology. They all went back to their seats. Inoué leaned upon his desk and hid his face. Honda sat down on one of the extra seats instead of his own and wiped his eyes with his handkerchief.

The President announced that the Mayor would give an explanation of the dredging affair, and then the Mayor made the following statement in a very succinct manner:

"As the members already know, the dredging of the River Tomita is entirely useless. I have consulted with the Home Office and the Prefectural authorities, and the result is that we have arrived at the conclusion that it is hopeless. The alternative is to build a light railway, either from Furukawa Bay or Komatsujima, to connect with Tokushima. We have arrived at the decision to abandon Tokushima harbour with some regret, but we cannot put up with the heavy expense, running into over a hundred thousand yen a year, involved in dredging the River Tomita. The present dredger will be sold, and dredging sufficient to allow the cargo boats to enter will be continued for the present by hand labour. As this decision has been reached after consultation with the members of the Diet of all parties, I desire that the members of the Assembly will take note of it."

The statement was followed by a dead silence. The quarrel between Inoué and Kusumoto had caused a reaction and there was now perfect quiet.

The President then announced the adjournment of the Assembly and the members screamed out chattering.

Eiichi, feeling like one bewitched, left the public gallery and went directly to see Tsuruko, to whom he discoursed on the worthlessness of politics,—how that out of an Assembly of less than forty members, two of them were keepers of houses of ill-fame, and how great his father had shown himself in the Assembly.

The next morning at breakfast, Eiichi ventured to compliment his father,—the first time that he had done so.

“So you were there, were you?” was all his father said.

CHAPTER XVI

Eiichi's Madness



THE elementary school was a strange place. Eiichi was placed in charge of the second class of the third standard, consisting of fifty-three children. The class contained many dull children. Whenever Eiichi turned to write something on the blackboard the children began to get noisy. The noisiest child was the son of a 'rikishaman,—a boy of eleven years old named Tsuneji Ishii. He was of a restless nature and totally unable to concentrate his attention. He sprawled over his desk, which was too low for him, like a spider, now taking out his ink-stone, now chewing his pencil, now scribbling in his note-book, and then all of a sudden taking away the slate of the child that sat next to him. This made the child cry, and then all the class would become disorderly. Eiichi was completely at his wit's end.

There were also some children of the upper middle class who were quite bright. There was the second son of the lawyer Sontoku Masuda, who was a member of the Assembly, and there was another boy, the son of Mr. Kawai, a member of the Assembly, and also a lawyer. He was a very bright and attentive boy. Of course there were some poor children who were bright and obedient, like Tanimoto, but on the whole the poorly dressed children were very dull. Eiichi thought that social reformation was as necessary in the school as anywhere else, and he endeavoured to carry out his own ideas on the psychology of pedagogics, paying great attention to training them in the power of concentration, in awakening their interest, in practising constant repetition, and generally in educating their powers of expression and vision. But he could not keep them quiet in the classroom, the reason being that the classroom was too small and the children too unequal in intellectual capacity. Eiichi

called his classroom a pig-sty. It was not uncommon for Tsuneji Ishii, during the ten minutes' interval between lessons, to make a dozen of the other children cry. Eiichi thought it would be impossible for him to be successful in his teaching while that boy was in the class, but he had not the courage to speak to the Principal of the school or the Headmaster. As Eiichi's classroom was so noisy the master who was in charge of the fourth standard in the next room, himself a graduate of a normal school, came to see what was the matter.

"Keep the children quieter," he said. "You disturb us all."

Every Monday a teachers' meeting was held, when the Principal and the Headmaster kept on talking about "Discipline, discipline," and as Eiichi thought they were referring to him he was abashed. Then he went to see how the Headmaster conducted his class. They were all girls in the fourth standard, and were all quiet while the master was teaching them. Eiichi was greatly impressed, but thought that if he had a class of girls he too could keep them quiet.

Every day his classroom was noisy. Then the Principal came himself to the classroom, but even when the Principal was present Tsuneji Ishii could not keep quiet. Eiichi decided that he was of abnormal mentality and took no further trouble about him. Sawamura and Hayashi, the Headmaster, made remarks to Eiichi that were almost insulting, but Eiichi thought that as Sawamura and Hayashi did not know anything about abnormal mentality it was not worth arguing with them.

A teacher's life had no pleasure for him. The drawing up of the method and details of teaching was especially absurd, and he had not the heart to write the foolish rubbish. He came to the conclusion that the elementary schools of Japan were places for stifling people.

The atmosphere of the teachers' room was especially hateful to him. All the twenty-six teachers were divided into grades, according to their salaries, even when the difference only amounted to one yen or fifty sen. Eiichi was in the fifth grade from the bottom. The teachers inferior in grade to Eiichi were four in all, two youths and a girl who had just come from the training school and had no experience, and the eldest son of the Principal, who had graduated in April of that year from a Middle School and was only a youth of nineteen.

But in real scholarship none of the teachers could compare with Eiichi. He could read English and German easily, and could understand all important books and science, religion, sociology, literature and art. In the intervals between lessons he read German philosophical works. For that reason the Headmaster and Sawamura did not tease him very much. The male and female teachers rarely spoke to each other, although there was only one teachers' room for both. It seemed as if they all regarded any communication as a sin. Last year there had been a love affair in the school between a man and a woman teacher, which furnished the subject for much amusing talk among the teachers. The couple were now married and teaching at a school in a remote part of Mima district, but their fellow-teachers abused them as if they were criminals condemned to death.

The only things in the school which were considered important were the military drill and the moral teaching. Eiichi was astonished at the poisonous effect of this military education with all its formalities. He did not think that he would remain long at the school, but he was sorry for the children. He was vexed at the thought that a nation with some hopes of international greatness should nip such hopes in the bud without scruple. He decided that the Japanese educational system had for its object turning people into puppets, and he contrasted it, to its condemnation, with the education of Rousseau's *Emile* and *Sophia*, which included sexual education. When he thought of the sexual education of *Sophia* and *Emile* he thought of his own blessedness in his love for *Tsuruko*, whom he went to see every evening. But while Eiichi rejoiced at the success of his own love affair, at the same time he felt an indescribable agony, though he believed that one minute's talk with his beloved redeemed the twenty-four hours' agony he suffered afterwards. Therefore he went on visiting *Tsuruko*. They would have to part in another month, he thought, and the romantic feeling of sorrow that welled up served to increase his love.

But at home Eiichi's continual absence every evening created all kinds of suspicions. *Kichisaburo* did not know his secret and *Umé* did not know that he was going to see *Tsuruko* every evening. For her part *Umé* had suspicions that Eiichi had secret relations with the servant *Yoshi*, because the girl asked

every evening if she might go and see her aunt, and also because Eiichi had always displayed too much kindness in his manner towards her. Then, at the end of May, the girl, whose real name was Koman Oyama, told Umé she was leaving, and went away. The reason she gave was that she was going to become a nurse.

Umé talked of nothing else from morning till night, but the relations of Eiichi and Koman. Kichisaburo said in his high shrill voice that one day he had seen the girl crying in Eiichi's study and this served further to arouse Umé's curiosity.

Koman Oyama had left at the end of May, and then Umé had sent Kichisaburo to the registry office with instructions to inquire for a good-looking parlour-maid. But two days passed, three days passed, and already a week had elapsed without any servant, and as the days went by Umé's detestation of Eiichi increased, and behind his back and even before his face she grumbled about how Eiichi had got the servant to leave because he disliked Umé and wanted to give her as much trouble as possible.

Then on the 7th of June, at sunset, when Eiichi, sunk in thought, was returning from a walk, he ran against Koman just by Terajima. Koman had become a student and not a trace of the servant was observable. With a very friendly expression she stopped and said she had to make an apology to Eiichi.

"Apology?" said Eiichi.

"Yes," said the girl in a low, pained voice; "the other day, when I left your house, the mistress said there was some connection between you and me and appeared to misunderstand why I was leaving."

"Well, there really is a connection," said Eiichi. "It was I who advised you to become a nurse, so you certainly can't say there's no connection. But who told you that the mistress had such an idea?"

At this the girl turned very red.

"I heard from Kichisaburo the other day when I met him in the street, and when I went to pay my respects at your house just now the mistress said to me, 'You and Eiichi can enjoy yourselves as much as you like now, can't you?' I was quite shocked."

"You are a coward. You ought to have said 'Yes, we enjoy

ourselves like mad every evening. What about it? What are you doing yourself?' If you'd answered like that you'd have shut her up."

Eiichi spoke bluntly and Koman hid her face behind the print wrapper she was carrying.

"How could I tell such a story?" she giggled.

"But words are only means to an end, you know. People often understand better if you speak by contraries."

"Yes, but . . ." and she giggled again.

"I am glad to hear people say there is some connection between us."

"But really, it's not a joke" . . . she giggled.

"Will it interfere with your marriage? Then we won't say there was any connection. You needn't be anxious about other people misunderstanding me. It doesn't trouble me a bit. Don't pay any attention to what a woman like Umé says. Well, have you got into the school?"

"Yes, owing to your kindness."

"Good for you. Study hard. All women, as I have often told you, can become like Frances Willard or Florence Nightingale. Even if you can't become like them you can be the mother of splendid children."

"I am studying hard. All the girls who went up for the entrance examination were High School graduates, but of them all only two were admitted."

She looked along the road as she spoke to see if anybody was coming.

"Yes? That was good. The graduates of the girls' high schools and such like are not much use. At any rate, to my mind the best people are those who find gratification in self-culture. In my own case—excuse my talking about myself—I learnt very little from what I was taught. You must study by yourself, even when you are in the nurses' training school."

He spoke to her like an elder brother, and Koman felt very pleased.

"Thank you very much," she said. "Although I have only had the pleasure of your society for a very little while, I shall never forget your kindness. I shall certainly repay it."

"To talk about repaying my kindness sounds rather theatrical, doesn't it? There hasn't been any kindness or anything of

that sort. You know, fifty years hence servants will be like a fairy-tale. If you don't become a nurse now, so that people cannot laugh at you, when you grow old you will be put to shame."

The people passing by looked at them knowingly, but Eiichi met their looks quite unabashed.

"If it hadn't been for you," she said, "I should never even have dreamt of becoming a nurse."

"Don't you think you've praised me enough?"

"The young master is so kind-hearted. Why is it that your father does not love you?"

"Kind-hearted? Don't be foolish. Well, I must go now. I've got a little studying to do when I get back."

"Well then, good-bye till I see you again."

The two then parted, but Koman had only gone a few yards before she met Kichisaburo carrying something in a wrapper. Kichisaburo asked her whom she had been talking to, and she told him, blushing a little, that it was the young master. Kichisaburo laughed sarcastically and passed on, and then, when he had only gone two or three steps, he turned round and called out "Ain't it funny?" after which he hastened on his way.

The next day Eiichi, as usual, came downstairs from his study to breakfast in the kitchen at about a quarter to eight, after his father and Umé had finished. It was his custom to read for about three hours from five o'clock in the morning. When he came down he found Umé standing in front of the sink, with a very cross look on her face.

"Good morning," she said. "You're later than usual."

"No, it's my usual time," he answered. "It's not eight o'clock yet."

"Is it eight o'clock already? We finished our breakfast about half-past six and have been clearing up since then. . . . The clearing up keeps me so busy I don't know what to do. I've been at it already for two hours."

Kichisaburo was just then seated on the boards eating his breakfast, and Umé addressed herself to him.

"Ain't I kept very busy every morning, Kichisaburo? And the young master gives a lot of trouble by being late,—reading till this hour. He ought to come down. He ought to come down at seven o'clock at latest."

She spoke in a very disagreeable tone. Kichisaburo only laughed.

"If we had two servants it would take all the time of one to wait on the young master and clear up after him. Now we ain't got a servant at all it's a great bother to have to wait till eight o'clock before we can clear up, ain't it, Kichisaburo?"

But Kichisaburo only looked at Eiichi and laughed "He-he!"

"Koman came yesterday, Master Eiichi," Umé went on. "She wished to be remembered to the young master."

"Yes? Thank you."

Eiichi answered carelessly. He was not going to let Umé arouse him. Umé, who wanted to make Eiichi angry by her teasing, found Eiichi's answer too careless to please her.

"The young master met Koman yesterday," she went on. "I suppose they had a very pleasant talk, eh, Kichisaburo?"

But Eiichi did not show any surprise. He supposed Kichisaburo had been telling tales to Umé.

"It's a great trouble to the mistress and Kichisaburo when there's no servant, but I suppose some people think it very amusing. I suppose Koman said it was all the mistress's fault for being such a scold, eh, Master Eiichi?"

"I don't remember that she said so."

"Yes, it's very amusing to see your father and brother put about, and to see a lazy person like me put to trouble. I suppose you and your dear Koman can talk as much as you want now every evening. Koman's got very pretty now, eh?"

She was venting her spite on him to her heart's content, but Eiichi was unmoved.

"Yes," he said, "Koman has got very pretty."

"It must be very nice for you to see her so pretty."

"Yes. I'm very glad."

"But there, when you have to do servant's work you soon lose your good looks. Koman wasn't pretty when she was working here. Really servant's work is very bad for you. Already, though it's only a week, my face and hands have got coarse, haven't they, Kichisaburo? Look at your mistress's hands. Haven't they become coarse, eh?"

Eiichi at heart was disgusted at Umé's pettiness, but he thought he would let her have her fill of abuse, and so, although her

continual scolding spoilt his appetite, he determined to remain cool and eat as much as he could.

"Eh, Kichisaburo, now we ain't got a servant each one must look after himself,—cook the rice and wait upon himself—except somebody, who cares for nothing so long as he can read books."

Still Eiichi did not get angry.

"I can't prepare any lunch for you to-day, Master Eiichi," Umé went on; "I couldn't even make any for Master Masunori."

Umé's temper was rising, but Eiichi appeared not to care.

"There, at last the clearing up's finished. I'm thoroughly tired of it. Master Eiichi, I've got to comb and arrange my hair now. You must wash up your things yourself. How busy I've been!"

She left the sink and went towards the back room, wiping her hands on her apron as she went. Kichisaburo had finished his breakfast and he now asked if he might put away his breakfast things, to which Umé assented with an irritating laugh.

Eiichi piled his breakfast things up on the sink as he had been told, and Umé wondered what he was going to do and waited to see. Then Eiichi, as he washed up the bowl, began to laugh.

"What a fool he is," jeered Umé, though in a nervous tone and so low that Eiichi did not hear her and did not stop laughing.

"Oh, really, he's such a fool!" said Umé a second time. This time her jeer reached Eiichi's ears. He had finished washing the bowl and was taking it out of the water. As he lifted it up he threw it on the stone paving and it was broken all to pieces.

"Oh," said Eiichi, "I've broken it," and the light laugh of a person in a dream escaped from his lips.

"Oh, how you startled me," said Umé. "Take care! It was lucky I wasn't hit in the eye by some of the pieces."

Then she went into the back room.

Eiichi hastened off to school, and after spending a very pleasant day teaching, went off and secluded himself somewhere.

For three days he did not return home. He was not at the

house of his stepmother in the country; he was not at Tsuruko's house; and of course he was not at Koman's house.

On the evening of the third day he came home, with the wan face of one already half dead. He found that a maid servant had come in place of Koman and was working busily in the kitchen.

Tsuruko had advised Eiichi not to oppose his father. Eiichi, however, regarded Tsuruko's tolerance as not in accord with the modern spirit of Luther's Protestantism, and to arouse his father to a sense of his position Eiichi thought it would be good for him to appear mad. He did not despair of the effect of remonstrances, however. One by one Eiichi enumerated the points upon which he wished his father to reflect. The first was concerning the true value of wealth. The second was the dream of becoming wealthy by a single stroke of speculation. The third was as to his responsibility as Mayor. The fourth was as to his relations with women, and the fifth was as to his treatment of Umé and his real wife and children. These were the points that weighed on his mind and on which he thought he could bring his father into agreement with himself. He did not in the least despair, but he thought that he could not get his father to agree with him by ordinary methods. He felt that he would like to show a tolerance as wide as the ocean and make an unreserved concession in regard to women and concubines, but when he thought of the number of saints with the fervour and blood of Christ, he felt that he must cry "No, no."

As he was living in the same house as his father he had an aversion to springing his remonstrances upon him and so he had kept putting it off from day to day till over thirty days had elapsed. He felt that he could never reprove him.

When he returned in the evening from his three days' fast, he found his father and Umé sitting over the brazier smoking and he thought it a good time to make his appearance.

He bowed low on the mats and coolly apologised for his absence and any anxiety it might have caused them.

His father was silent and took no notice of him. Umé expressed surprise.

"You don't know how anxious you've made us, Master Eiichi," she said. "Where have you been?"

"Well, I had something to think about."

His father looked at him for a moment with a disdainful expression.

"Eiichi," he said, "there is no more undutiful son in the world than you are. Remember that."

He spoke in a cold, composed tone. For a time none of them moved.

Then Eiichi raised his head and looked sternly at his father, who, with both his elbows on the side of the brazier, displayed entire indifference to Eiichi's behaviour, and Umé followed his example; but both in their hearts felt anxious as to what Eiichi was going to do next.

But Eiichi never spoke. He concentrated his fixed gaze on his father.

At last the father's spirit was shaken and he was seized with a fit of shivering.

"Eiichi," he said, "are you mad? What's the matter with you? How dare you look at me with that insolent stare?"

"Master Eiichi," said Umé, "don't look like that. What a terrible look you have! Don't do it."

She gave a forced laugh in her effort to appear at ease.

Then suddenly a gentle smile hovered over Eiichi's thin, wan face. His eyes shone with joy.

"Father," he said, in a low, loving tone. "Father," he said again hoarsely. "Father," and this time his voice was broken by sobs. But his father did not reply to any of his appeals.

Eiichi's tears fell freely.

"Father, for Heaven's sake listen to my . . ."

The end of the sentence was lost in his sobs. Umé, whose abuse of Eiichi four days before stuck in her head, thought he was still excited about it and was going to tell his father.

Her curiosity was strongly aroused.

A few moments passed.

"Father," said Eiichi, so dispirited that he was unable to lift his head, "am I really your son? Somehow or other—why, I cannot tell—I cannot love my father from the bottom of my heart. Every day I wonder how I can come to love you and every day my tears fall. For three days I have been wandering about Mount Oasa thinking how I could grow to love you. Ah, if there were only some way of binding heart to

heart, how I would seize that power to pour my thoughts into my father's breast! That is what I have been praying for."

His head fell and he was silent as he wept. But in his heart he thought "Reproof? No, it is stale. In the time of Shigemori it might have been of service, but in the twentieth century there is no room for the child who reproves his father. To go out and capture a woman is sufficient. The hero of the modern novel does not do anything so out-of-date as to reprove his father."

The ironic voice in his breast irritated him. To still it he spoke again.

"Father," he said, "father . . . I . . . There are some things I must say to you. You must excuse me, father, but have you yourself ever thought if your present life is in accord with human duty? I cannot help feeling that it is not. I have long been wishing to tell you this, but I was afraid that you would scold me again, and so I became a coward and could not tell you. . . ."

His father sat with his head bowed down and Umé assumed unconcern and continued to smoke.

"Each time I go into the country," continued Eiichi, "I cannot help thinking how heartlessly you have behaved to my step-mother."

"Heartless, do you say?" cried his father. "What are you drivelling about?"

"Yes, heartless. Really heartless! My father has buried a poor woman alive."

Eiichi spoke boldly, but he was crying.

"But this is a thing of the past. I am trying to bring back to the warm life of the present the relation which existed between my father and his true wife in the past. My father is already fifty-six. And he has been separated from his true wife for thirty years. If I can restore the life of thirty years ago I can bring back the passion and fervour. No, there was no passion and fervour from the beginning. . . . But how can I help saying it?"

Eiichi's mind was troubled. In his heart he scorned himself for saying such things while he was the child of a concubine himself. To-day his father was not so taciturn as usual.

"You young fool! I won't allow you to speak to your father

in that way. Haven't I provided Hisa with everything she wants?"

Umé suddenly stood up and went out. To Eiichi her large chignon looked very ugly. When she had disappeared he spoke gently.

"Even if you scold me, father, I must speak. Be patient with me for a little time and listen. If you will listen to me then I will gladly die. Father, according to what my step-mother at Umazumé says, you have lost heavily in speculation lately. For Heaven's sake, please cease from speculation. According to what I hear the property at Umazumé is all mortgaged. What excuse, father, can you make to the ancestors of the house of Niimi for this?"

Eiichi had suddenly become a Confucianist.

"It's my own business what I do, isn't it? You don't know anything about it. What has an impudent brat like you to drivel about? What do you mean to do with me? I will let you do what you like! As I've become an old man I suppose I'm no use any more and you may have your way with me."

"Do you say that as it is your own money you can gamble with it?" said Eiichi hotly, although he was sensible of his disrespect to his father.

"Ugh! what can an impudent fellow like you know about it? Your father has provided everything for you and now you turn round and are insolent to him."

The father, pale with anger, leaned on the brazier while many thoughts ran through his head.

He thought that it was his fate that all his household affairs had fallen into disorder. He had gone as an adopted son when he was sixteen years of age. If he had not entered the house of Niimi as an adopted son he would have had to end his days as the second son of a brewer in Otsumura. If he had not become a Niimi he would certainly not have been able to complete his education. He would not have had any money for electioneering expenses. He had not been able to control his desire to make Kamé his concubine, and in bringing Umé into the house he had yielded to the pressure of his passions. He had come into conflict with Hisa when he took Kamé. Now he had come into conflict with a child of Kamé by taking Umé. It was his destiny. If he had been able to control his passions all

this trouble would not have happened. It would have been well if he had never been adopted by the house of Niimi when Hisa was thirteen years old. . . . It was his destiny,—his destiny for which he was not responsible.

"Then will you tell me, father, which is your own money?" Eiichi went on. "You are continually throwing away the property of the house of Niimi. Where is your own money?"

This was too harsh an attack to be borne.

"You can say what you like, but you can rest assured I haven't stolen any of the property of the Niimis."

"Does it make any difference?" asked Eiichi.

"Say what you like. If I'm a thief then I'm a thief. If I'm a gambler then I'm a gambler and that's all. However clever you think yourself you couldn't have built a house like this. Call me a thief or a robber or whatever you like, but try to live in a house like this if you can. What a great thief there is in the world, isn't there?—one who is able to occupy the position of Mayor,—a peaceful and fair thief, who knows how to hold the reins."

Eiichi was silent for a little time, but again courageously returned to the attack.

"Father, what are you going to do with us—Emi and Yoshinori?"

"I shall do with you what I like. I don't want any of your interference. Whether I let you live or kill you is my affair. You think because you are the eldest son you can speak freely, but you're mistaken. I'm going to hand over the right of succession to Masunori. I am. A clever fellow like you wouldn't want to succeed to the property of a thief, would you? Nor shall you. Now I hope you're satisfied."

"No, I don't want to receive a farthing from anybody. Of course Masunori will succeed and I will hand over the right of succession to him very gladly."

Eiichi's tears were exhausted. He could no longer tell good from evil. He felt as if his body was only a machine. But he had not yet said all that was in his thoughts.

"Father, am I really your son?" he asked dully.

That was all he could say. His face had a strange, mad look on it as he asked this question.

"No, I'm not your father," said his father curtly.

Eiichi had a strange feeling in his head and could no longer control himself. He burst into an hysterical laugh, while his eyes filled with tears.

"Father," he said again as a last appeal. Then he stood up. "Why does my father not love me? Why does my father not love Eiichi? Why did my father take Umé immediately my mother died?" Thus he murmured to himself as he leaned against a pillar.

Eiichi knew that he was only pretending to be mad. He remembered that his younger sister sometimes pretended to be mad in order to worry their stepmother. Nevertheless at that moment he felt sympathy with the mental condition of his sister when they said she was mad. He fancied that the state of mental excitement lasted in madmen longer than in sane people. Also he felt somehow that this mental excitement refreshed him so much that he did not want to repress it.

"Father, I love you," he said. "But I hate your mania for speculation and your lust for women."

He felt as if Tsuruko had suddenly taken possession of him, and his voice took on the gentle tones of a woman.

"Why does my father hate me? Was I wrong to enter the Meiji Gakuin? Are there any people fools enough to become Government officials or lawyers, now, in the present troubled state of the world? Was I wrong to come back from the Meiji Gakuin? Do you condemn me, father, without having heard my reasons? But I . . . Well, I will not say any more. I will continue my studies according to my own lights."

He was talking aloud to himself. He thought his father would understand.

For some time his father, bending low so that his head almost touched the kettle on the brazier, had been crying. He felt afraid of Eiichi, who seemed to him to have some supernatural power.

Umé had come back and was listening in the passage. When they were silent again she came in.

"Eiichi seems to have gone mad," she said.

She sat down in front of the brazier as she spoke and put the tobacco-box on her knee to fill a long pipe. Then she began to smoke with an unconcerned air. Eiichi noted her vulgar

manners, and giving a grunt of disgust he went out. He had gone to see Tsuruko.

Umé saw her master was crying and burst into a loud laugh.

"What are you crying about, master?" she said. "What nonsense! What does it matter what Eiichi says? We don't care a bit for him. Ain't it what I always said? You must find him a fine girl, I tell you. You fix him up with a pretty girl and he won't worry you any more. You won't do what I tell you, and that's why you've had such a lot of worry," and, cleverly, she half argued with him, half soothed him.

But the father was silent, thinking of the past. From time to time he looked towards the passage with the idea that the ghost of Eiichi's mother would appear. The face of Eiichi's mother, whom Eiichi resembled, loomed before his eyes.

CHAPTER XVII

Doubts and Fears



EIICHI left his father's house and went to call on Tsuruko, whom he had not seen for some time. She was astonished when she saw his emaciated face, but to her inquiries as to the reason he returned no answer. If she had fervently kissed Eiichi when he first went in perhaps he would have answered, but as he thought she seemed rather reserved he did not speak. For a moment he thought that Tsuruko was not a girl from whom complete sympathy could be obtained. Perhaps Tsuruko did not understand *fin-de-siècle* men, he thought, being only a country girl, and he was silent.

Eiichi felt that the word "lover" was meaningless; he doubted whether there was any sweetness left in love in a conflicting world. Yet the more he doubted love the sweeter it seemed. The pangs of love! There was nothing so wonderful in the whole world. As Eiichi was silent Tsuruko began to get bolder and took his hand: but even this did not arouse Eiichi's interest in love. To-day, in his depression, he felt an inclination to spurn love. With her hand clasping his he recalled the grove on Mount Oasa—the grove said to be tenanted by a goblin—where, for three days . . . In that grove of tall cedars there was a small shrine, and there he had fasted and meditated for three days . . . In the dead of night he had heard the wind blowing through the branches of the cedars and had seen the pale moon, yet but ten days old, come peeping into the hall of the shrine where he was sitting. He recalled that at that moment he had suddenly opened his eyes, and a weird feeling of ecstasy had thrilled him as he gazed at the moon. The thought came to him at the time that he did not wish to play any part in any great world-drama in which love or any other form of egoism entered. Yet he found in the sighing of the wind as it passed

through the branches of the tall pine-trees the same mystery as there was in the confused voices of humanity and in the treble of Tsuruko's voice, and an inclination came over him to turn his head and look at Tsuruko. Her face seemed radiant for some reason, but he felt that embracing her was like embracing a child. When he could still by a word the storm that swept through the grove on Mount Oasa; could quench for a second by a single wave of the hand the light of the pale moon:—ah! at those moments, how whole-heartedly could he allow himself to be caught in the toils of love! Passing from void to void of the universe, would he not have found real happiness in alighting upon annihilation? He felt that there was something fatuous in being by the side of Tsuruko, while such thoughts were passing through his mind.

Eiichi embraced Tsuruko and closed his eyes. He thought that the test of his love for her would be to lose immediately all consciousness of her physical existence and to see her only as a vision. But no vision of her came to him; there was only the odour of the scent she used.

Eiichi wandered from thought to thought. Was he himself substantial or merely a vision? In his heart he felt that the reality around him was only a dream and the world a vision. The outer world was no longer real; to him truth was a vision and a vision the truth. Yes, the outer world was no longer real: the world had run mad.

He drew near to Tsuruko.

"Tsuruko," he said, "the system of the universe has become a little deranged. The North Star is $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees too low . . ."

He spoke in a low, melancholy voice. Tsuruko did not understand at all what he was talking about and was silent, but she thought that as Eiichi, to everybody, and to herself particularly, manifested a kindly love and sympathy, indescribably noble and lofty and filled with a virtue far surpassing that of the ordinary Christian, perhaps he was suffering for the ills of others. She kissed him, and then in a low and disconsolate voice, with down-cast eyes, she asked him what was the matter.

"When do you go to Hiroshima, Tsuruko?" he asked.

Tsuruko hesitated. "I don't want to go to Hiroshima at all," she said.

"Why?"

"Why? Well, why do you look so sad nowadays? I feel uneasy somehow, going to Hiroshima and leaving you here. . . ."

"Do you want to remain near me! I, too, do not want to separate from Tsuruko. Shall I let you go? No, I can't let you go even if you want to."

"No, I will not go. Shall we stay here until we die? Oh, I haven't thanked you for cleaning the garden the other day."

"That's nothing."

"And then, before that, you filled the bath for us and went on an errand. How can I thank you?"

"Why, if you asked me to lay down my life for you I would do so."

"But I don't want my dear Eiichi to do that. You are my beloved. Even God could not part us."

"Tsuruko, I intend to leave my father's house soon."

Tsuruko was astonished. "What's the matter?" she asked.

"Well, the truth is . . . But you mustn't be angry till I've told you all. I've just had another quarrel with my father."

"Quarrel? I asked you not to quarrel with him."

Tsuruko had become a little perturbed.

"Tsuruko, don't hang your head. Listen till I've told you what it was all about. You know what I'm always telling you about my relations with my father. Tsuruko, a rupture with my father in the near future is inevitable."

"What have you done? Why should there be a rupture?"

"He has cut me off from the succession."

"For whom?"

"He has transferred it to Masunori, he says."

"How cruel your father is!"

"Yes, when I was in Tokyo he didn't send me enough for my school fees, and now that I have come back he treats me as a stepson."

"How sorry I am for you!"

"I can endure being treated as if I were an incompetent person, but it is intolerable to see my father treating society as he treats me."

"Does your father dislike you so much? Can't you go on living with your father?"

"If things go on in this way it can only end in my father's killing me."

"Killing you? What should I do if he killed you? Then what are you going to do?"

"I think of going somewhere soon."

"Where?"

"Well . . . Shall I follow you to where you are going?"

"To Hiroshima? Yes, but what will you do there?"

"Anything will do,—errand boy, apprentice, farmer, anything. . . ."

"Farmer? I don't like farmers."

"What, you don't like farmers? Oh, don't you like farmers? I thought you were different from other school-girls, but now I find you are the same. What is holier than a farmer's life? There is a good deal of truth in Tolstoy's simple life."

"Oh, wait! I only said that to see what you would say. You mustn't fly out at me like that. Amos and others were originally farmers, weren't they?"

Tsuruko had found an excuse, but Eiichi was intent upon making his own standpoint clear.

"I adore farming," he said, "but I don't think the farmer's peaceful existence is all that there is in life. That is why I am teaching in an elementary school."

"No, there is no life so holy as that of a farmer's," said Tsuruko, now completely a convert to the philosophy of farming.

At that moment her aunt called her from below and she had to go downstairs.

Eiichi opened the window and turned over many thoughts in his mind. The moon, almost full, was shining on the garden, and all the leaves of the persimmon, orange, and peach trees were glittering in the light. The neighbourhood was very quiet and there was not a light to be seen in any of the houses. The moon moved quickly across the sky. There was a sound of the gate opening; Tsuruko was going somewhere on an errand. Eiichi remained alone sunk in thought.

He thought of the reason why he had left the Meiji Gakuin and of his present meaningless existence, and he was mortified at the comparison. He felt that his life had fallen into decay. If he studied chemistry and physics and invented something his

life would not be so purposeless and his learning not so meaningless. Suppose he gave up his fancies about social reform and religion and entered the Engineering College of Tokyo University, and tried to invent something. . . . The moon came out from behind the clouds, and every corner of the garden was lit up. With a kind of scorn in his heart he rejected such positivism. To invent more machines for a people who worked like machines was useless. Recreation was a necessity for mankind. Science, religion, morality, art, even life itself, were merely means of recreation. Art was merely the amusement of creating clothes in a wider sense, and morality the amusement of creating little puppets. Religion, again, was the making of great men and was also an amusement. Life was a kind of drama; if mankind could not find amusement in it then they were mere brutes.

But the people of modern times did not know how to amuse themselves and it was necessary to teach them. His reproof of his father arose from his father's mistaken ways of enjoyment. In his examination of himself Eiichi began to vindicate the philosophic studies that he had pursued up to now as a sort of recreation.

Tsuruko came back earlier than he expected, but when she came upstairs Eiichi took no notice of her and continued his meditation.

"You shouldn't brood over things," she said; "it worries me. God knows what is best for man. Leave everything to God."

Still he remained silent. Tsuruko thought that perhaps her remark that she disliked farmers had made him angry.

"Don't be angry with me," she said. "Was it wrong of me to think differently from you? You shouldn't be so angry with me when I am sorry."

Eiichi was not really angry, but to her apology he returned no answer. For ten minutes he did not utter a word. Tsuruko leant against the window-railing and was also silent. She affected not to care, but nevertheless she appeared to be weeping. Eiichi did not outwardly show any concern over Tsuruko's tears, but at heart he also was affected.

A few moments passed and then Eiichi asked her if they should read some of Shelley's poems together, and so, till one

o'clock in the morning, they read Shelley's poems. Tsuruko said they were very interesting.

That night Eiichi was again compelled to stay at Tsuruko's house. Tsuruko spread the quilts for his bed in her own room, and while she was spreading them they talked of Shelley and then of the activities of the Socialist Party in Tokyo. Tsuruko expressed herself as much interested.

Then Tsuruko, kneeling by her desk, read a chapter of the Bible, after which she went downstairs to bed.

Eiichi got into bed, but spent the night in dreaming and got no rest.

CHAPTER XVIII

Emi's Flight



FROM that night Eiichi had a strange feeling in his head. A violent shivering seemed to run through his frame incessantly and he sometimes found himself reflecting on his condition with dismay. When the shivering was so strong as to shake him externally the distinction between dreams and reality seemed to be lost.

On the evening of the day following that which he had spent at Tsuruko's house, Eiichi, while sprinkling water in the garden as requested, suddenly felt an inclination to smash the bucket and sprinkler, and accordingly broke them up into small pieces. Then he burst into tears at his own pitiable condition, and felt that he would like to go and hide himself in the grove on Mount Shiroyama. Without taking any supper, therefore, he went there and sat crying under a big camphor-tree till about twelve o'clock at night. Then he went back and woke up Tsuruko and spent another night at her house.

Kichisaburo and Umé told every one that Eiichi had gone mad, for the next day he felt an inclination to cut one of the beautiful pillars of the house with his penknife, as he thought that the pillars were a symbol of his father's extravagance. He took off three or four shavings from the cypress wood pillar by the alcove in the front room, and the pillar looked so unsightly after he had cut it that he could not contain his laughter. The laugh did him so much good that he thought it had lengthened his life.

Then the next morning he got the idea that Kichisaburo was such a hateful creature and at the same time such a pitiful fellow that he would like to strike him and then smooth his head endearingly. So he suddenly sent his fist against Kichisaburo's head. But when Kichisaburo cried out impudently, "Whatever are you doing?" Eiichi felt that he hated him. He

therefore caught hold of him and threw him down and got on his back, as if he were a horse, catching hold of his two ears and pulling them as hard as he could. Kichisaburo began to cry out with pain and Eiichi burst into a peal of laughter.

In the classroom at the school, however, all the children were now very obedient to Eiichi, which made him very pleased. He picked out the cleverest and prettiest among the little girls to fondle, while he wept inwardly. The little girls were very fond of being embraced by their teacher.

When Eiichi went to see Tsuruko he always felt as if he wanted to cry. He found that he could not often lay his hands on Tsuruko's soul, and when he did it soon slipped through his fingers, like a ghost. Nevertheless Tsuruko was so dear to him, and there being no rival to interfere in their relations—not even a father or elder brother—he went to see her every day and stayed late, talking and crying in a very delightful manner.

He himself did not think that he was going mad, however, for although he did all sorts of strange things, he played these pranks deliberately. Thus four or five days passed.

Once during this time he took out his beloved penknife from his breast and amused himself with scratching on the white walls of the newly built store-house the Chinese characters for "Isolation," "Greatness," and "Incarnation," in large letters.

It had been arranged that Tsuruko should leave for Hiroshima on Monday, the 28th of June, the steamer starting at ten o'clock at night. The day would soon arrive. On the Saturday before he received an urgent letter from his stepmother in the country asking him to go and see her at once as she wanted to tell him something. The letter had already been opened, but he did not express any anger. He did not trouble himself in the least about Umé's and Kichisaburo's suspicions or evil designs, and getting a holiday from the school he started off in high spirits for the country.

When he got out of the town he came all at once on the plain of the River Yoshino. Now that he could look all over the newly planted paddy-fields the world seemed a busy place, and as the honest yellow colour of the straggling roofs appeared his mind was filled with tranquillity. The destruction of the bucket and sprinkler appeared to him as strange and pitiful. Why had he not come out at once on to the open plain and not behaved

with such childish madness? But it was useful to have the courage to break a cup now and again when one lived in a world of men. No, it was more than useful; it was a necessity. No, it was not a matter of necessity either; it was predestination. It was not to please himself that he had cut the pillar in the alcove. It seemed to him that he had been commanded to do it. When he reflected on the matter he vindicated himself as unable to act otherwise.

Two miles, four miles:—he was drawing very near the house now. While he was crossing Ushiyajima ferry the thought came to him that, after all, to meet and embrace the loved one was better than all nature. No, that was not it. The best of all would be to have nature and the loved one together. It was unbearably lonely walking alone. Alone one could not grow enthusiastic. The loneliest wilderness would be a place of enjoyment with the loved one. In the wilderness there was no one to find fault with him; people who made nasty remarks like Umé and Kichisaburo would not be there. It occurred to him that he should have brought Tsuruko with him; but no, Tsuruko would be too ashamed to go back to Umazumé. Ah, Tsuruko was dear! How dear she was! He could not exist a day without seeing her: he must go back that day. The day after to-morrow she was leaving. He must gaze upon her face if only for an hour more, as soon as he got back. . . .

Thus his thoughts ran as he walked. When he came to the ruin of the house where she had lived he stopped and murmured "Tsuruko," and then turned his steps to his own house.

He entered the house and supposed that his stepmother and younger sister were engaged in needlework in the outside room, as they were not in the main building. He went along the verandah, and then he heard his stepmother scolding Emi.

"How stupid you are! Can't you even sew this properly—this gusset? If you are as stupid as that, how can you ever get married?"

"Well, mother, how are you feeling to-day?" asked Eiichi from the passage.

The screen was slid back from the inside, and "Oh, Eiichi, is that you?" said his stepmother. "It was very good of you to come. Did you get my letter? Thank you, I'm getting on . . ."

She spoke in a depressed manner, however.

"Eiichi," she went on while she gazed at Emi, "Emi is really so dull that I'm at my wit's end. She can't even make a dress for herself properly."

Emi hung her head while she went on sewing the gusset.

"She must be a great trouble to you," said Eiichi, "but please be patient with her. I'm glad to hear that you're getting better. But, mother, what was the business on which you wanted me to-day?"

"Well, come in and sit down. Don't stop on the verandah. You can take your time to-day as to-morrow's Sunday. Emi, go and fetch a cushion."

Emi got up in silence and hastened to the kitchen. Eiichi, looking after her, saw that she was poorly dressed, with a red woollen sash. Her clothes were badly put on, especially her waistband, her hair was all in disorder, and her neck black with dirt. As she went along on her big feet he felt some difficulty in realising that she was any relation of his.

"Oh, thank you," he said, "but I must get back to-day as I have some business."

"That's very strange. Won't you stay the night? I've been better this last day or two, and, as you see, I'm up to-day, so I thought we'd have a long talk this evening and you'd tell me all about Tokyo."

"Yes, but I've got to get back this evening."

"Yes? Business, you said. What's the business?"

"Oh, nothing particular, but one of my friends is going to Hiroshima on the 28th and I've something that I must talk about."

Emi returned with the cushion.

"There, do sit down. Emi, some tea. So that's what it is. Well, I suppose you can't stay then. That business I wanted to see you about,—it's just this. Your father's suddenly announced that he's going to raise the autumn ground-rent four per cent."

"When did he come and say that?"

"When was it? Let's see, the day before yesterday Kamé came from town and went about telling people. You know Kamé's more at the house in town than he is here. We didn't know anything about it. Well, yesterday the men from Shin-

den all came here together to complain about it. It gave us quite a scare, didn't it, Emi? Weren't we frightened yesterday morning?" and she appealed to Emi, who had just arrived with the tea.

"Yes, I don't think we ever had such a fright," said Emi, evidently to ingratiate herself with her stepmother.

"What happened really?" asked Eiichi.

"What happened?" said his stepmother. "Why, they all came in a line to the entrance. How many were there, Emi? There must have been eight or nine of them."

"Yes," said Emi. "I should think there were even ten of 'em."

"Ten? Did ten come?"

"Yes, and without saying what they wanted they asked very quietly for the master. They all came in without any hesitation."

"Who went out to them?"

"I was so frightened I didn't go out. We sent the servant out first, and afterwards Emi went out, didn't you, Emi?"

"Well, and after that?"

"We told the servant to say that the master was absent, but they said that Kamé had told them that if they had any grievance they had to go to Umazumé. They said that the master must be in, though, of course, your father wasn't here, and we didn't know anything about the ground-rent. We said that as the report had come from town, you know, we didn't know anything about it, but if they had anything to complain of they ought to go to town, but they said there couldn't be any doubt about it as Kamé had been telling everybody and so it must be true. 'You must know about it,' they said, 'cause you're part o' the family, but if you don't know then we won't pay the ground-rent. If the master ain't in,' they said, 'we'll see the missus.' So we told the servant to say that her mistress was sick, but they told her if that was so then they'd see the young missus. Emi was so shy that she wouldn't go and see them, but as they said that they wouldn't go away till they'd seen her, there was nothing else to do but to send her out to 'em. They spoke so loud, of course, I heard everything they said in the back room. 'If we'd been told,' they said, 'when we was preparing our seedbeds, that the ground-rent was to be raised, we should 'a'

been able to think it over, but now the rice 'a' grown and it's been manured two times, and raising the ground-rent now by four per cent. will put us in a pretty fix. If we was to make trouble you'd go for the police, so we won't, but just think o' the deal o' trouble you're giving poor people like us. We'd be very much obliged if the good lady o' the house sent a message to the master in town saying that if he can't abate a bit we can't neither, and if the police are called in to make us pay the extra rent, we'll just let the police send us to prison. That's what we're going to do.' They didn't get excited, but as they thought there were only women in the house they spoke in such a vulgar way they made me feel quite bad, woman as I am."

"Well, you've had strange happenings," said Eiichi, smiling unconcernedly.

"It was really terrible. Suppose they'd got troublesome what could we ha' done against the ten of 'em, without a man in the house and me sick? They could ha' soon killed all three of us."

She was exaggerating the affair a little.

"Hm! Father's acting very harshly," said Eiichi.

"To do such a thing when he knew the trouble it would gi' us," said his stepmother. "We're really in a terrible fix."

"Yes, it's a great bother," said Eiichi. "What did you do after that?"

Eiichi could hear the shouts of some children catching shrimps with a net in the canal at the back of the house. A shrike called loudly from the top of a persimmon tree.

"We told 'em that we really didn't know anything about it," said his stepmother, "but that we'd send to town and look into the matter very carefully."

"Did they go when you said that?"

"Yes, in about an hour, after they'd had a talk together, they went away. Yesterday I was thinking all day what I was to do, and all night I couldn't sleep a wink I felt so nervous."

"Did you speak to the police?"

"Well, I did think o' doing so, but then I thought we should have to lay bare our shame, and besides I didn't know but what they mightn't do something to the messenger on the way to the police station, so I didn't send anybody. I can't tell you how anxious I was yesterday."

"What about the men servants?"

"Well, they're not members of the family, you know, and as I felt ashamed o' telling them your father had raised the ground-rent four per cent., I couldn't let 'em know that the Shinden people had been here frightening us."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"That's why I sent for 'ee to come here quick. I thought I'd have a talk wi' 'ee and see what could be done."

"Yes, but I don't know what to do."

"But we must do something. Is it really true, d'you think, what Kamé has been telling every one?"

"I don't see how it can be. Yet, if it wasn't true I don't see why they should get angry. Coming from father it's probably true. I suppose they find it difficult to pay the interest."

Eiichi spoke in a half joking way.

"Yes, that's likely it. All sorts of unpleasant things happen when you get poor. I heard your father lost sixty thousand yen in speculation the other day. Is it true, do you think?"

"Well, I only heard it from you when I came back from Tokyo. So they say he's lost sixty thousand yen?"

"Then you don't know about it although you are living with him? They say he's lost sixty thousand yen. Kamé said so."

"What a pity!"

"Yes, really I'm quite distressed when I think that in a little time this house and ground may be taken away from us."

"Let them take it. We were born naked, so we may well live naked. Aren't birds, for instance, clothed just the same day and night?"

Eiichi was thinking of Christ's saying as to Solomon in all his glory.

"I shouldn't complain if I had beautiful clothes like a bird," said his stepmother. "But you're a man and can talk like that. Women'd never say such things."

"Women? They're not so different from men," replied Eiichi. "Mankind would look much more beautiful without clothes than with them."

Eiichi had started a nudity cult.

"Well, from the point of view of reason perhaps you're right, but you can't always go by reason in this world."

"Is there any reason that the world should be illogical?"

Only those who are on the side of reason can get on in the world. Reason was made to be in accord with the world."

"I must give it to you, Eiichi," said his stepmother, laughing, "if you talk like that. But what d'you think we'd better do? Give me your advice what to do next."

"What to do next? Well, I wouldn't worry about it. I think . . ."

"Not worry? Why, we don't know whether they mightn't do some damage to the house."

"It doesn't matter if they fire the house or break it up. There's no fear of their murdering our souls even if they do murder our bodies."

Eiichi had gone to extremes.

"But we don't want them to set fire to the house," said his stepmother. "Do we, Emi?"

Emi only laughed.

"Don't say such things, Eiichi," went on his stepmother, "but tell me what I should do next. I don't want ten or fifteen men coming here again and frightening me."

"What a coward you are, mother. Who cares for ten or even twenty of them?"

"How big you talk," she laughed. "Eiichi's quite changed, hasn't he, Emi?"

"I don't know," was all that Emi said.

"But really, what shall we do? If they ask your father and find out that it's true, we shall have no excuse to give 'em, and every one will know our shame."

"Don't be anxious, mother," said Eiichi. "I'll undertake to settle the matter. There's no difficulty about it, so don't worry. You've got a list of the tenants in the house, I suppose."

Eiichi was staring at the dried-up pond in the garden with its filthy growth of moss. Beneath the kitchen verandah there was a litter of broken glass and blue medicine bottles. A spider had spun his web under the eaves and the sun shining on it made the web sparkle.

"Yes, we have a list," said the stepmother. "What do you want with it?"

"Oh, I'll just go through it and send postcards saying that the proposed increase of four per cent. in the ground-rent has been cancelled owing to certain circumstances."

"In your father's name?"

"Well, it doesn't matter whether it's in my father's name or my own."

"You'll make your father angry again. I won't be responsible if he gets angry."

"Well, let him get angry."

Hisa looked at Emi. "Emi," she said, "you'd better see about getting dinner ready . . . Well, do as you like, only I don't want to have to worry about it any more."

Emi hastened off to the kitchen.

"Father does what he likes," said Eiichi, "so we can do what we like. Where's the list?"

Eiichi then sent the servant out for some postcards and wrote on each of them that the increase in the ground-rent had been cancelled. It took him until two o'clock to finish them. In the middle of the work he had occasion to go through the kitchen, and there he saw Emi, while standing at the sink washing out a pan, picking up and eating the pieces of rice as they fell out. He felt great pity for her.

As soon as he had finished writing he took his leave, but as he was going out of the gate he heard some one coming after him in sandals, and a voice cried "Brother." He turned round and found it was Emi. His thoughts were so intent on Tsuruko that he had forgotten all about Emi. He looked at her and found that she had been crying.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I've got something to tell you, brother," she said.

"What is it?"

"Every one can see us talking here. Can't we go to the river or somewhere?"

"What's the matter? Have you been scolded to-day? I'm really very sorry."

Emi was silent for a moment and then asked again if they could not go somewhere where they could not be seen. She appeared to be very anxious that nobody should see them.

"Well, then," said Eiichi, "let's go to the river bank at East Shintaku."

"Anywhere will do. If anybody was to tell stepmother, she'd scold me again," and Emi fidgeted and looked behind her at the gate as she spoke.

"Well, follow me quickly then," said Eiichi, and he walked off with long strides while Emi followed with her short steps. They mounted the dyke and concealed themselves behind a bush on the bank of East Shintaku. Eiichi gazed at the green fields of Shinden and the blue water of the river while he questioned Emi.

"What's it all about, Emi?" he asked.

"Brother, I feel as if I want to die, everything's so disagreeable."

She sobbed, and Eiichi, looking at her, felt sympathetic tears rising in his own eyes.

"Why do you say that, Emi?" he asked.

"I can't bear stopping at Umazumé any more. Yesterday, just 'cause I broke a plate she was telling everybody that came how stupid I was. To-day she's been cross ever since this morning. If only I had my real mother! . . ."

Eiichi was silent. The ferryboat was crossing from the shore at Tamiya to Shinden. The reeds were reflected in the clear water.

"Then there's Danjiki's daughter, who's seventeen and is going to marry Takayuki at West Shintaku,—she's making her own wedding dress, and yesterday her father (Hisa's cousin) came to the house and right before me she said, 'This girl o' mine's so stupid she's no good at all. She doesn't know how to use a needle or even to wash up a cup.' That's what stepmother said. I felt as if I wanted to die."

"Emi, I don't like to see you get in such a temper."

"But just think of it. I have to get up in the morning earlier than any one else, light the stove, call up the servants and the men, and make the breakfast, and then I have to work till nine o'clock in the evening. Even when I work like that she says 'How slow you are! How slow you are!' and drives me about. Then, also, if I just chip the rim of a plate she says I must pay for it."

"Does she make you pay for it?"

"Yes, I had to pay five sen yesterday."

"Did stepmother take the money?"

"Of course she did."

Emi had begun to cry again.

"Do take pity on me, brother," she said. "My mother's dead,

and even if I have a father, you know what he is. Stepmother treats me worse than a servant and I can't bear it any longer . . . Three days ago . . ."

She stopped. She was so distressed that she did not know what it would be best to tell him,—whether to tell him how ten days ago she was caught eating on the sly in the back room and was scolded; or how her stepmother told her she was awkward in serving the rice; or how one of the fowls had disappeared a week ago and her stepmother had said it was her fault; or how she was scolded for not cleaning the household shrine properly; or how her stepmother complained that she always used four pith wicks in the lantern and scolded her for that; or how she was always scolded for the flavouring of the bean-soup. Her thoughts wandered from one thing to another. Three days ago her stepmother had accused her of taking a yen note which she had placed under her mattress when she went to bed. This was the thing that rankled most sharply in Emi's mind, but she could not bring herself to speak of it although it rose in her thoughts first. She remembered how many times false charges like that had been made against her.

"Well," asked Eiichi, "what happened three days ago?" Emi was crying so much that she could not answer for a moment.

"Three days ago, though I didn't do it, stepmother said I'd stole some money—a yen. She . . . She'd put it under her mattress when she went to bed, she said, and it wasn't there in the morning."

"But you didn't steal it, Emi, did you? And if you didn't steal it, why should you trouble yourself about it?"

"Yes, but it's very hard to be called a thief when you're not one."

"Oh, it's as bad as that, is it? You know Koman, the servant in town? She's become a nurse, and they say that it was I who made her become a nurse just to annoy the people at home. But what's the use of people being always afraid that their actions will be misconstrued? I know you feel that your position is very disagreeable, but look at my case. They don't give me full three meals a day and I have to wash up my own things. And I have only one of these," and he showed her his knitted undershirt, which was discoloured with dirt.

Emi took a look at it and burst into fresh tears.

"If you cry as loud as that," he warned her, "the people passing above will think it strange."

"How cruel father is," moaned Emi, "not to care how we're treated."

"There's more than that, Emi. They don't give me any lunch to take to school now, and because if I study at night I burn up a lot of oil, I have to get up in the morning to study."

"Is father as bad as that?"

"Oh, that would be all right if that was all, but he's going to give the right of succession to Masunori."

"And put you out? You?"

Emi was astonished. Eiichi looked out over the river. There were ripples on the still, smooth surface of the water, which was white and sparkling in some places and blue in others, as if forming part of a design. Truly it was a beautiful sight.

"Don't cry, Emi," he said. "You needn't be anxious while I'm alive. Just wait a little while."

"But I'm tired of living in the country. I'm afraid I shall be killed or die, being scolded like this from morning till night."

"But bear it just a little longer. What else can we do?"

"Yes, but I've got tired of Umazumé and can't stay here any longer. Oh, how hateful it is to be the child of a mistress!" she cried amid her tears.

The words "child of a mistress" awoke an echo in Eiichi's breast and his face took on a look of determination.

"Emi," he said, "it's all right. I'll take you with me. Let's go to Kobé. You're prepared to go out to service, aren't you?"

He spoke in a hurry.

"To go out to service? Well, it's far better than stopping at Umazumé."

"Can you go as you are?"

"I don't care how I look. If you don't mind I'll come with you now. But how about money?"

"I've got ten yen left out of my salary so you needn't be anxious about that. We can get to Kobé easily on that. Let's go at once before they find out at home."

"Will you really take me with you?"

Emi wiped her eyes on her sleeve and looked up. On her face had appeared an endearing look of trust in him as her protector.

So Ushiyajima saw them no more and they fled in jinrikisha

to Tokushima, which they reached about five o'clock. Eiichi, while riding in the jinrikisha, was struck by the fact that his tears had fallen that day for the sake of the sorrows of his little sister.

They had nowhere to go to at Tokushima so they sought Mount Taki and walked about there. When they thought of the future they felt as if the sun was setting for the last time. From under the three-storied pagoda they could see the whole of Tokushima.

"It's against my will your going out to service, Emi," said Eiichi.

"It's my fate," she replied. "My star is unlucky and it can't be helped."

She showed very clearly that her mind was made up, but Eiichi was troubled at the thought that he was going to turn his own sister into a servant when a month had not elapsed since he had assisted a servant to rise in the world.

"Emi," he said, "if you feel lonely wherever you go to in Kobé, you won't be able to write to me. That's the worst of it. But still I shall go and see you every month or so."

"Yes, I don't like the thought of it. To be together like this makes me feel as if I was in heaven. It's very hard I can't write to you, but at any rate I shan't have my stepmother scolding me."

There was something pitiful in her hopefulness.

"Look, brother," she cried delightedly, "the electric light is lit at Nakasu. Isn't it pretty?"

Eiichi saw that Emi had no ideas as to the future. As she gazed at the electric lights he thought of the future of this country girl and his eyes became dim. When he thought of the many temptations of the city to which she was being sent and the ease with which the conscience is blunted, he could not restrain his tears.

"Are you crying again, brother?" said Emi, turning to her brother when he did not answer.

"Emi," he said, "it's all right your going to Kobé, but suppose you fell ill or something, what are you going to do?"

"If you talk like that how can one ever go anywhere? It's 'cause you're ill yourself that you talk so. Would a young,

healthy girl like me fall sick?" and she smiled with great confidence.

"Yes, but you're so high-spirited that I feel anxious about you. When country people go to town they often get into trouble because they feel as you do now. There's so many strange things in town, you know, that you get carried away unintentionally. For a little time you enjoy yourself and then the dream is over. For instance, who thinks beforehand that he will have beri-beri when he goes to town until he actually has it?"

Under these warnings Emi became depressed, and when he saw her dejected face he felt pity for her and determined to let her go to Kobé. To cheer her up he asked her if she would like some rice cakes.

"No, don't buy any," she said. "We can't afford to spend even ten sen. Let's go to Nakasu. I wonder what time the boat goes."

"It's too early yet. The *Kyodo-maru* leaves at eight o'clock and the later one must be at ten o'clock."

"I wonder what time it is now."

"It must be seven o'clock, it's got so dark. Let's walk down slowly. We needn't get flustered."

"I shan't feel safe till I get aboard."

"Don't be afraid; I'm with you. But aren't you hungry? Won't you have something—some vermicelli?"

"Vermicelli? No, I don't want anything. But you must be hungry. You must have something when we get down."

So they went along, passing by the Sangitei and Shiraitotei restaurants, and came out in front of the bronze statue of the Emperor Jimmu. At the entrance to the Shiraitotei there was stuck up a placard with the words "Celebration of the completion of Tomita Bridge" written on it in large letters. They could hear the sound of samisen on the third floor and a clamour of voices.

"Perhaps father's in there with that lot, Emi," said Eiichi, laughing. "He takes life easily."

Emi and Eiichi went by the eight o'clock boat to Kobé, and there went to a servant's agency in Aioicho. But the agency wanted a person to stand as surety, so they went back to the house of Yoshitaro Yoshida, the boatman, where Eiichi told him all

the circumstances and asked him to arrange the matter. Eiichi asked him to keep the matter secret from his father, repeating this request earnestly many times.

Eiichi went back by the twelve o'clock boat next day and Emi went down to the pier to see him off. Just before he went on board Eiichi told Emi that he wouldn't be surprised if he came back again very soon.

"Oh, do come," she said imploringly. "I shall be looking forward to it."

"It's too early to go on board yet. Let's have a little talk," and Eiichi led her along the pier. When no one could hear them he spoke.

"Emi," he said, "you must have all your wits about you and work hard, you know."

He looked at her as he spoke and Emi hung her head. On her brown face, with its red cheeks, there appeared a look of resolution.

"I don't feel as if I wanted to go back," continued Eiichi. "The only reason why I'm doing so is because I want to reason with father once or twice more. If I find it's useless I shall come away."

Of course he was thinking more of Tsuruko than of his father. He conjured up before him Tsuruko's beautiful rosy cheeks and her waving hair.

Emi assented to her brother's plans. "Yes," she said, "that will be best. If we both disappeared together he'd certainly come to seek us, and that would be a great bother."

While they were talking the whistle blew and Eiichi had to hurry aboard. The vessel cast off from the pier and he saw Emi left standing there lonely. He thought it was not manly to stand staring after her, however, so he went down into the third-class saloon. But still in the dark corners of the saloon he saw in imagination the pier at Hyogo and standing on it, with bent head, the piteous figure of a dumpy girl, with rusty, disordered hair, bright eyes, red cheeks, brown face, and rough hands.

CHAPTER XIX

Tsuruko's Departure



EIICHI got home at seven o'clock in the evening and entered with an unconcerned air. His father and Umé were having their evening drink and appeared to be surprised when Eiichi turned up. His father at once questioned him about Emi. A messenger had come from the country the day before with inquiries about her, so his father knew all about it. Nevertheless Eiichi returned no answer. Although his head was aching he went to call on Tsuruko, who saw that he had been crying.

"What's been the matter to-day?" she asked.

"Oh, there's been another scene."

"With whom?"

"With my father."

"What was the matter?"

"I've taken my young sister away."

"Where to?"

"Well . . ."

"Won't you tell me?"

"I'm ashamed. You can guess what it is, can't you?"

"Yes, but . . . Have you had another collision with your father about something?"

"Yes."

"What have you done with your younger sister?"

"I've left her at Kobé."

"Kobé? When? Did you go too?"

"To-day. I've only just come back."

"To-day? You are funny. What did you do with your sister when you took her to Kobé?"

"I put her out to service."

"To service? How cruel!"

"Cruel? You say that because you don't know the circumstances."

"Tell me the reason. . . . Can't you tell me?"

Eiichi told her all about it, little by little, feigning sadness and forcing his tears out so as to secure Tsuruko's sympathy. He thought to himself that if he didn't make a pretence of crying she would think he was very unsympathetic. After all, everything was for love. It was plain that his mind was unbalanced.

When the day came that the beloved Tsuruko was to leave Tokushima he did not feel particularly upset, but although he went to school that day, he did not play with the children very cheerfully.

About eight o'clock in the evening he went to Tsuruko's house and behaved for an hour like a lover who is about to be separated from his beloved one. Twenty minutes of the time were spent in silence, and the remaining forty minutes passed quickly in lamenting that they could not proclaim to the world that they were husband and wife. Nevertheless they found time to weep together.

When he went to Nakasu to see her off he found a crowd of pretty girl friends, all with their hair done in the latest style and bright faces. Mrs. Taylor was among them, and a teacher at the girls' school. Some of the girls were from Tsuruko's class and some from lower classes. The only men to see her off were the Pastor and Eiichi.

Perhaps it was to see all of Tsuruko's pretty friends that Eiichi went into the second-class saloon, which Tsuruko had entered, and there, in front of them, reminded Tsuruko of her promise to write to him. He was going out again when Tsuruko asked him to stop and talk a little longer, as they had twenty minutes yet before the boat started. But in spite of her entreaty he went out thinking that it would not be manly to remain there. While he was leaving the saloon he heard some one asking Tsuruko who that handsome young man was, and he heard Tsuruko reply very proudly, "That is the son of the Mayor of Tokushima."

When the boat was on the point of starting, Tsuruko, that white pearl, enswathed in lovely silken robes, came and stood on

the deck. Eiichi thought that she looked especially in his direction.

The boat passed away, leaving a trail of smoke, and Eiichi returned home and soon went to bed. He tried to conjure up Tsuruko's face, but found that although he could form an image of her profile, he could not, try as he would, picture her full face. Not only this, but he had a feeling that he had forgotten Tsuruko's face. In her place there appeared to him his little sister, with her brown face and rusty hair, standing in tears with bent head.

"Tsuruko has already gone," he murmured to himself.

CHAPTER XX

The Bedclothes



THE next morning Eiichi had a dream.

It was a dream about a farmer in Virginia whose name was something like "Sabi." At that time some one was plotting to drive America and Germany into war, and it was said that if one fasted for thirty-eight days, it would be possible to catch the conspirator. Of course, if the conspirator was caught the war between Germany and America and other wars would cease in the world. Then the people all said, "Let us try to fast," and "Sabi," according to the dream, fasted for thirty-eight days without any trouble, and, of course, the conspirator was then easily caught, and not only the German-American conflict averted, but all other conflicts as well.

This was his dream, and it seemed to him without meaning. Still half dreaming he began thinking that people who disliked war should get themselves naturalised in Switzerland or Belgium, which were neutral countries. Let them get naturalised quickly. . . . Not naturalise them? Who? . . . What was that? Some fetish . . . Hegel? A mere fantasy . . .

As Eiichi stayed in bed unusually late his father opened the shutters himself to say his prayers. Generally he called Eiichi to get up and open the shutters, but this morning he said nothing, so Eiichi stayed in bed.

Eiichi heard a voice at the entrance call "Paper," and then there was the sound of the paper being thrown in. He thought that he would read the paper as a change from the study of dry philosophy. One could pass the time very comfortably reading the paper: there were many people who spent their whole lives contentedly reading the papers. But if they did nothing but read the papers they would not be able to get any food. . . . However, he would read the paper a little, he thought, and he got up

and went in his nightgown to the entrance, where he squatted down and began to read the paper.

The leading article was something about the crisis in China. . . . Ah, the country of Lao-tse and Chuang-tse was in danger, eh? Well, it was none of his business if she were destroyed or not. . . . As long as he was left alive they could destroy it as much as they liked. Even if the country was invaded and he was killed, his spirit would survive, and as long as his spirit survived it would be all right. The talk about a crisis in China was all a pretence on the part of those fellows in order to make a great noise in the world, and it was no business of his.

He skimmed over the first page and turned to the second. It was filled with telegrams from London, New York and other places about all sorts of things. Among them was an account of an unprecedentedly grand ball, and in glancing through it he thought that he should like to attend such a ball and dance himself with a Western beauty. The third page was filled with an account of the suicide by drowning of a beautiful girl at Omori, another suicide at the Kagon waterfall, the kidnapping of a young girl, and so on. Looking at the account of the suicide of the beautiful girl at Omori he saw it was stated that the suicide was due to the faithlessness of her lover. How fortunate the man must be who was loved by a beautiful girl like that! The suicide at the Kagon waterfall was due to disappointment in love. It would have been better to wait and get another beautiful girl to love you. It was a strange way to win the heart of a girl, to go and do funny acrobatic feats at the expense of your life. Yet he felt some sympathy with the lover.

Reading these accounts he thought what a strange thing love was. Lovers were fortunate. Such incidents as these, which showed the value attached to love, made him recall his own relations with Tsuruko. He kissed the newspaper.

He looked at the advertisements on the fourth page and saw announcements of new novels and works on philosophy. One was a Study of Lotze by Iwanaga, to which was attached a long puff. The price was one yen seventy sen. Looking at this advertisement he felt as if he himself was a failure in the struggle for existence. If he gave up his ideas of social and family reform and continued his studies for two or three years he could easily write a book like that. He remembered that he

had recently told Tsuruko that he intended to write a book on philosophy, but now he felt that he had not the heart or the strength to write even one page. He felt inclined to tear the paper into pieces in disgust, but turning over the page he came upon a column that he had not noticed before, containing some account of books just published. Among them was a criticism of Iwanaga's Study of Lotze, in which it was stated that the style was so obscure that readers would find it difficult to see the point of the argument. "Ah," said Eiichi, "if that is all the criticism I get if I write a book, what's the use? It would be horrible."

He threw the newspaper down and went back into the inner room, meeting Umé, who was going to say her prayers. She went out on the verandah muttering something about his not having put away his bedclothes. Eiichi did not answer, but commenced putting on his clothes, thinking all the time how stupid it was being a teacher at an elementary school from which no satisfaction was to be got, and how such persons as he were not considered by society as worth even a penny. He decided to do without any breakfast and to go upstairs and read philosophy, so hurriedly rolled up his bedclothes and shoving them into the cupboard in the entrance, he rushed upstairs to his study and sat down by his desk.

What should he read? He had borrowed two books from the Christian missionary the other day, and he felt that he should like to read about the Christian doctrines and study the history of its teachings from the materialistic point of view. Which book should he begin with, Harnack or Hall? The missionary had told him to beware of Harnack, as he was a heretic, so Eiichi thought he should like to read him. But Harnack's work was in five volumes. If he was to finish the book that day it would be best to read Hall, as it was only three hundred and sixty pages and he could do it easily. Yet Harnack seemed more profitable as it was more voluminous. Suppose he put a volume of each on his desk and compared them.

Harnack was very clearly printed on smooth paper. Hall was printed in big type on delicate paper that seemed like Japanese. Which should he read? He decided that Harnack was most promising, and putting Hall back into the bookcase he propped his head on his hands and began to read Harnack. Then

he began to think what he was reading the book for. Would he become famous if he read it? If he told Tsuruko that he was reading Harnack she would probably say, "What a scholar you are!" and give him a kiss. But Tsuruko had gone to Hiroshima. . . . Yes, she would be riding in the train now and would have got to somewhere about Okayama. He did not know the country west of Okayama, but Tsuruko was probably admiring the beautiful scenery. There would be a letter from her to-morrow. Perhaps she would write: "Separated from my beloved I was so sad that the sunset in the Inland Sea passed unobserved. What enjoyment was there to me in the beauties of nature? Only my gaze was turned south and your beautiful form was in my vision: only I kept wishing that I had wings that I might fly into thy arms. My sleeves were wet with unconscious tears." There would be phrases in the letter like that probably. He would reply as simply as possible in the fashionable style: "The form of my beloved as she stood on the deck! Whether I shut my eyes or open them your form is always before me. The kiss you once gave me in your study,—how can I ever forget it? With nowhere to go to amuse myself every evening I open my study window and look out. But the mistress is absent and the house is closed. You have departed eternally and I weep."

That was the way he would write he decided. Busy with such fancies he had not the least idea what he was reading about.

"This won't do," he thought. "My special aptitude is for philosophy, and I mustn't let ideas of women interfere with my studies." He concentrated his attention and commenced reading again from the beginning. This time he understood a little of what he was reading, and he was just beginning to feel pleased with his power of concentration when he heard a voice down below saying, "Master Eiichi, you put your bedclothes away without folding them up."

It was Umé calling from the entrance; she was again giving vent to her impudence. Wasn't it all right the way he had rolled up and put away the things? He wasn't going to do any more and he pretended not to hear and went on reading his book. Then Kichisaburo came upstairs.

"Young master," he said, "the mistress says you're to fold up your bedclothes and put them away."

Eiichi took absolutely no notice of him and went on reading his book. Then the maidservant came up.

"Young master," she said, "they ask if you will have breakfast and also if you will kindly fold up and put away your bedclothes in the entrance."

To this message he returned no answer. The servant waited silently for the answer, however, and out of pity for her Eiichi said, "You can go downstairs."

This was no answer to the message, but the servant went downstairs.

"She keeps watch on me every day, down to my bedclothes," he thought. "It makes me angry to see the wench."

He jumped up and went downstairs. When he got to the entrance he found Umé folding up the bedclothes very carefully with an intent look on her face. Eiichi marched up, snatched the bedclothes from her hands, and with a muttered "Impudence," hastily folded them and bundled them into the cupboard, shutting the door with a bang.

"Ugh!" said Umé. "What a funny creature you are, when a person's folding them up for you not to let them do it. You can be as obstinate as you like. To pay you out, I won't have the bedclothes washed for you, however dirty they be."

Umé gave a sneering laugh, and Eiichi's father came out and struck Eiichi quickly over the cheek and ear with a long tobacco pipe he was carrying. Eiichi fell down with a cry, but soon jumped up again and went out of the house. He did not return all day, but spent the day on the mountains in meditation. Then at night, till about nine o'clock, he wandered round the votive-offering hall of the Seimi shrine. But it was so cold that he was forced to return home. The spirit that had enabled him to spend three days fasting on Mount Oasa had disappeared. Dejected he stood before the shut gate of his father's house in the drizzling rain that was now falling. Time passed, but no one came to open the gate and Eiichi wept like a girl. After the lapse of an hour, however, the maidservant opened the back door and he got her to let him in.

CHAPTER XXI

Incendiarism



A LETTER arrived with the words "From somebody at Hiroshima" written in a feminine hand on the back of the envelope. Of course it was from Tsuruko. She wrote about how dear he was to her and how she wondered whether she would be able to study at Hiroshima for three years, separated from her beloved. But when he looked through the letter there was nothing in it about their being joined for ever as husband and wife, or about a public announcement of their betrothal. Not only that, but he had some doubt whether she really did pine for him. When he thought of his relations with Tsuruko and with his father and Umé he felt that he should like to die at once. His own unhappy circumstances and the beauty of Tsuruko convinced him that they would never become husband and wife.

Thinking thus he resigned himself to his fate. Let what would happen: he desired to die. If he could not die naturally he would like to kill some one and so meet death. This desperate feeling, which had overcome him in spite of himself, suggested to him that he set fire to the house. He went into the kitchen to get some matches, and thought he would try to set light to the screens in the entrance. Then it occurred to him that that would be too bold; so he went into the inner room and tried to set light to the screens there. He was afraid at first that he really might set the place alight; but then he decided that it did not matter. Let the place be reduced to ashes and himself too; it would be better than going on living. There was something pleasant in the thought of light, soft ashes. He applied a match to the second screen on the southern side. There was a burst of flame, and he thought that the screen and the mats and the house itself would be burned down; but the fire went

out. The flames went up to the top, but when they got to the lintel they went out. He thought he would try another screen, so he set a light to the third one on the south. In this he was more successful, the flames jumping up as though they were burning paper, and the screen smouldering very fiercely. He thought that if he tried again he might really set the house on fire, but then he reflected that it would make a great disturbance in the town and cause no end of bother, so he decided to refrain. Instead he set fire to Tsuruko's letter and burned it up.

Luckily for him, while he was up to these tricks neither Umé nor his father nor Kichisaburo nor his brother Masunori came into the room. If they had come in he would have fought with them. But it was much better to avoid a quarrel, and congratulating himself on his escape, he slipped out of the house. But that day also he did not go to school.

Where should he go? It was rainy, and he could not sit in meditation with crossed legs as he had done the day before at Yakko-ga-hara; and he had not the spirit to try again the vigil on Mount Oasa. He decided that he would just go and amuse himself at Komatsujima, and so he crossed the Tokushima Bridge, passed in front of the County Hall, went over Tomita Bridge, and got as far as the office of the *Tokushima News*. There he stopped to look at a copy of the paper which was hung up outside under the eaves. On the third page there were the usual poor illustrations to the feuilleton common in country papers, and below them, under the heading "Society News," there appeared something like this:—

"The story is a little old, but the other day, when the celebration of the opening of Tomita Bridge was held at the Shiroi-totei Restaurant, two girls, one named Sanshichi from the Yamato, and the other Naruto from the Nishiki, were given handsome tips by the Mayor, and after the break up of the party the two girls were called by the Mayor to the Sangi teahouse and returned home stealthily early the next morning. Such conduct is quite to be expected from our up-to-date Mayor."

Eiichi was reminded of what a free and easy place the world is. If you had plenty of money it was a place where you could embrace a thousand girls at once. He thought painfully how he had unconsciously taken great pains to surround himself with the enclosure called morality, but the world, from remote an-

tiquity, had been destroying the enclosure. Mankind, from of old, had found emancipation. What a strange world it was, he thought, as he trudged along towards Nakanochō in his heavy clogs.

Before his eyes he saw the burning screen that he had set alight. The fire had run up the screen with a burst of flame and when it had suddenly gone out he felt like Urashima * when he opened the jewel casket. Those flames! He saw them still. Although they seemed to him to have gone out, he had left the house in such a hurry that they might have been still burning and to have now grown into a big fire. No, there could be no fire: the alarm bell was silent.

But at any rate he had set fire to the house and Umé and his father would make terrible trouble about it. How cruelly they would set the police on him! In that case, even if he went to Komatsujima, he would not escape being locked up. He would be tied up. What were his father and Umé scheming at that moment? That was what he would like to know. If he were a ghost he could hasten back to see, but he was a ghost in the flesh.

While he was thus thinking the rain suddenly began to fall heavily, resounding on the roofs and the eaves and on his paper umbrella with a noise like a fall of pebbles. The rattling of the jinrikisha and the noise made by the shopboys in putting up some of the shutters to keep out the rain were drowned in the noise made by the downpour. He did not know what to do. He had not the courage to walk to Komatsujima in that rain. But where should he go? Never mind, he would just walk about, and he walked on as leisurely as he could, like some one passing the time away. Just then three elementary school children came out of a side street. They were going to school, holding up their heavy umbrellas, which had not prevented them from getting half wet. It was a pretty sight.

Eiichi had supposed it must be eleven o'clock, but it was only half-past seven. He thought that he would go to the Nikenya,

* The legend of Urashima relates that he was taken on the back of a turtle to the palace of the Sea-dragon under the sea, where he spent many hundreds of years, which, however, seemed to him like a few days. Desiring to return to the upper world, he was given a casket but warned not to open it. He returned to find his people long since dead, and, opening the casket in despair, he was changed into an old man.

and got as far as the police station at the corner of Omichi. Then he saw that it would be impossible for him to get to Komatsujima, and that being the case it occurred to him that he might call on his aunt, who lived in Higashi Shinmachi, as he had not seen her for some time. Should he go to his aunt's?—to that dirty little house, full of children to see that indigent, querulous, ignorant old aunt of his? Better not, better not! He could stand her perhaps for thirty minutes or an hour, but for three or four hours it would be unendurable. He knew exactly what his aunt would talk about:

"You know, Eiichi, even though we are so poor there ain't one of our relations will come and help us. Look how rich brother at Shibafu has got, and he won't lend us a penny. Even when I go to see him, which I do very rarely, he never asks me to bide the night. Then brother in Tokushima-honcho,—he's come to be Mayor, and a member of the Diet. He's got on something wonderful, but he don't even come to pay me the compliments of the season. When I'm in difficulties and ask him for the loan of two or three yen, he says he ain't got the money in the house and he can't oblige me for the present. That's the way he puts me off. Then father, you know, he never does any work, but just loiters about. Really life ain't worth living. . . ."

That was the way she went maundering on in her country dialect. It was unendurable. He had met her the other day in the street and she had asked him to call on her, and as he didn't call on her very often he felt rather sorry and went to see her, listening to her tale of woe in silence. If he wanted to hear such sorrowful talk, he thought, it would be far better to go to the Daishido at Taki and listen to the sad tales of the beggar-pilgrims by the roadside. He might as well go to see his aunt, but then he must be prepared to be made miserable. Could he do that? At home he had trouble enough. Was it necessary that he should have trouble when he went outside?

He went along Omichi asking himself such questions. He knew that he was walking along Omichi, but somehow or other everything was blank to him, although his eyes were open to what was going on, and in the shops on both sides of him people were carrying on their business. He knew there were second-hand furniture dealers and watch-makers and pawnbrokers and

so on among them, but he could not distinguish clearly between the pawnbroker's and the confectioner's. He went along unsteadily, like one walking on a ball or riding on the wind. A dung-cart was coming along, but he paid no attention. "Hi! Look out," shouted the man, and Eiichi returned to earth. The objective world to which he had been lost suddenly became clear to him. Here was the barber's, the draper's, here the green-grocer's. Now he could distinguish between them.

He decided that he would go to his aunt's, and turning back to the police station at the corner, went along the second street on the left, which was Higashi Shinmachi. On the left there was a long block of houses called Matsuura's and his aunt's house was the first in the block. He slid back the wicket and went in, finding his aunt engaged in cleaning.

"Oh, Eiichi, what's the matter to-day?" she asked in astonishment. "Ain't you going to school?" Then, before he could answer, she asked him if he had come on business.

"No, nothing particular," he said. "My head feels strange and I feel as though I were going to have a nervous attack, so I'm not going to school just now. As it's raining and it's not very amusing at home, I thought I'd come and see you."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said his aunt, smiling. "Do come in."

"I hear brother's made a lot of this," she went on while Eiichi was going in, and she made a ring with her thumb and first finger in explanation.

Eiichi looked grim and replied that he did not know.

"There ain't any reason for your not knowing when ye live in the same house," said his aunt, and she sidled up to Eiichi and tapped him on the back.

"I don't know anything about it," said Eiichi doggedly.

But his aunt was not to be silenced.

"Tomita Bridge and that dyke at Hama, you know," she went on. "It doesn't do to know too much, does it?"

This was unendurable.

"I tell you I don't know," he said. "Do you mean my father has received bribes in connection with Tomita Bridge and the dyke?"

"That's what people say," replied his aunt, and she smirked with a very knowing air.

"Oh!" said Eiichi. "Well, I don't know anything about it."

"There, it don't do to know too much. Father heard the story and brought it home, and then the foreman of the navvies, who comes regularly from Ojo, looked in the other day. There's all sorts of stories going about. There's a rumour that brother did a very clever trick."

"Can such a thing be done?"

"There, you must know Sakagi of Ushiyajima,—Sakagi who lives at the village next to Umazumé? He married our Hana, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Eiichi, and he recalled that when he was going to the elementary school his cousin Hana had married a man named Sakagi of Ushiyajima, although they were divorced later.

"He's engaged now in the engineering works," continued his aunt. "As he's on friendly terms with brother, brother used him to play a fine trick on 'em and did 'em proper. If I was to tell ye, ye'd get rare angry I expect. But, Eiichi, you'd better go upstairs. They're all out at school or somewhere to-day. Just go upstairs, won't ye?"

"Thank you," said Eiichi, and he followed his aunt up the small, steep staircase.

"I'll get some fire," said his aunt. "You won't mind everything being dirty, will ye?"

As she said, everything was in disorder. There were two rooms, one twelve feet by nine feet and the other twelve feet by six feet, but the partition between them had been removed. Near the window were two small desks. These belonged to two girls, relatives of his aunt, who were attending the girls' school, and for looking after whom his aunt received something every month which was intended to help her along. Besides the desks, there were baskets and bags, all open, and unfolded clothes scattered about in disorder. Eiichi sat down in the middle of the room, and his aunt put an empty brazier in front of him and sat down.

"I don't want any fire. I don't smoke," said Eiichi.

"Don't ye really?" said his artless, easy-going aunt. "Well, as I ain't sure whether there's any fire or not downstairs I won't bring any."

"I wonder how father can do that sort of thing," said Eiichi.

"Ain't it proper he should?" said his aunt. "What's the use

of being Mayor if one can't? As he only gets a salary of twelve hundred yen a year or thereabouts, it stands to reason he couldn't keep up that big house on that."

His aunt spoke as if there were nothing out of the way in the Mayor's conduct.

"But, aunt," said Eiichi, "there's a Municipal Council, you know, and a Municipal Assembly, and even the erection of the smallest bridge is a matter of consultation among them all, isn't it?"

"Yes, but you know if people scent money they soon fall into line. Folks are smart nowadays and go where the money is. Even if that wasn't so, these contracts, you know, they take time to put through, and if the Mayor himself undertakes to see that the work's done, that's all there is to it."

There was a look of exultation on his aunt's thin face as she gave this explanation.

Eiichi picked up a copy of the *Girls' World* that was lying near him, and looking at the contents saw that there were some very interesting articles in it.

"People nowadays, even girls, buys all sorts of books to read—magazines and novels and such like—don't they?" said his aunt on seeing this. "They spends money on 'em something terrible. There's that Tokyo paper—'Pock' is it or 'Puck'? It's terrible amusing. We had an old one here somewhere, with a picture in it of a girl waiting for her lover to come home from a card-party, and one of the lover too—it was terrible clever, it was. I wonder where it's gone to; it used to be somewhere here," and she got up and looked about the desks, but although she turned over all kinds of magazines she couldn't find it.

"I can't find it," she said at last, and came and sat down again.

Eiichi was absorbed in the *Girls' World*.

"Have ye found something amusing, Eiichi?" asked his aunt, peeping into the magazine. "Do read us a bit if it's amusing."

Eiichi was glancing through an article on the manners of schoolgirls all the world over, and he merely murmured "Yes" in an absent manner in reply to his aunt's request. He had apparently forgotten that he was in his aunt's house. He was chuckling to himself over an account of the freedom of the love affairs of American schoolgirls.

"Is it funny?" asked his aunt, looking up into his face. "Do tell me about it."

But Eiichi only went on reading, and his aunt, a little out of countenance, got up and went towards the staircase.

"Ye'll stop and have dinner with us, Eiichi, won't you?" she said. "There's nothing very nice, but if you ain't got to go home you might as well."

"Thank you," said Eiichi curtly, and went on reading.

But when his aunt had gone downstairs Eiichi began to think that he ought to have been a little more polite. She had asked him to stay to dinner, in spite of her poverty, because he was her nephew, and an extra mouth to feed would no doubt put her to some trouble, unlike what was formerly the case. . . . Perhaps she really invited him to stay to dinner from the fulness of her heart, and it pleased him to be invited in that way. He felt sorry for her. His uncle, by riotous living and the keeping of separate establishments, had ended in bankruptcy, although the Ois of Ojo had formerly been known in all the neighbouring villages as a very rich family. That was at the time of the Emperor's restoration. It was all his uncle's fault and his aunt was not to blame. She was really greatly to be pitied. The same fate overhung his own family, Eiichi thought.

As he turned over the pages of the *Girls' World*, reading a little here and there, all sorts of memories rose in his mind. The last time he had called on his aunt his uncle was there, and his uncle had told a story about a person being bewitched by a badger and had earnestly stated his belief in badgers bewitching people. Eiichi recollected that his aunt had told him that his uncle had lately become very pious, and did nothing but go to worship at the shrine of Daijingu at Aiba-no-hama and repeat some sort of incantation in his spare time. There appeared to Eiichi, as if in a dream, the form of his uncle, with his rapidly whitening crop of close-trimmed hair, his pointed, stubbly chin, his deeply wrinkled, thin-cheeked face, the colour of bronze, doing nothing all day but loiter about the streets. The vision gave Eiichi a forlorn feeling. There was a smell of dirty clothes in the room. He noted the torn screens placed against the wall. The waste paper thrown under the desk seemed to him inexpressibly untidy. There was a sooty cobweb in a corner of the ceiling, and three or four inches of string were hanging

down in a very unsightly way. The mats were dirty. Out of the window at the back could be seen outhouses, drying places and potato fields, and behind that the ugly chimneys of some medical baths, all out of proportion and making him feel sick. The leaden sky, which showed no sign of clearing, also oppressed him, and he felt an inclination to go away. But there was nowhere to go and he continued to read the magazine. It was rather interesting and dinner-time came before he was aware of it.

For dinner there were soup and rice and pickles. When he had finished he wondered what he should do next, as he had all the afternoon to get through. He thought that if he went upstairs and read the magazines or something the day would gradually wear away, so he went upstairs and read until the girls came back from school at four o'clock. The quick passage of time struck him anew, and he felt that his aunt would think that he was staying too long. He made some sort of parting compliment, therefore, and left the house rather awkwardly. But he did not know what to do next or where to go. The rain had slackened slightly as the evening approached. There was nothing for it but to stop at an inn for the night. Yes, that was a good idea. He had about two yen and twenty sen with him, and though this would not pay for a first-class lodging it was more than enough for second-class and would leave him fifty sen over. But where should he go? To the Nikenya? Yes, the Nikenya. But it would look strange if he went so early for a lodging. Should he go to the Kompira temple at Seimi just to while away the time? He acted on the idea and wended his way to Seimi in a futile sort of way. The thought of his own futility occurred to him as amusing and he smiled as he mounted the steps to the temple. He went at once into the *ex voto* hall and sat down at a little cake-stall, where he ate a piece of sweetmeat. He expected to find it delicious, but it seemed to him tasteless. The whole of Tokushima could be seen from the hall, but the view did not attract him. The houses seemed to him to be arranged in a meaningless manner; the people to be wandering about in an aimless way. Here and there smoke was rising in the air aimlessly. Eiichi thought that the life he was leading, wandering about all day, was not an unpleasant one. It was much better than that of a statesman,

proudly followed by a large retinue. To wander about at his own free will had become very pleasant to him.

Before he had been there long the old cake-woman began to shut up her stall. "Should he go home?" he thought. If he did not go home where should he go? It was yet too early to go to an inn, and he decided that he would go slowly to the end of the street where the Nikenya was. He went down the temple steps in his high clogs, and saw at the bottom there was a police-box in which the policeman was busily engaged in writing something. This seemed so futile to Eiichi that he smiled to himself. Coming out by the draper's the thought came to him that all these futile people required clothes to conceal their shame. When he got to the end of the street it was not yet dark. A little longer, he thought, and at last reached Hokkei Bridge, a distance of over two miles. It was rapidly growing dark, and he decided that if he turned back then he would just reach the inn in proper time. He turned round in the suburbs, therefore, and went back towards the town. When he got to the street he saw that next to the Nikenya there was a rice-cleaning shop and next to that a blacksmith's. Opposite all these was a field, but after that there were houses on the other side of the road. Next to the blacksmith's was a cheap lodging-house. Suppose he stopped there for the night, just as an experiment, he thought. He felt a little timid, however, as he wore a cap and an elaborate kimono. But it would never do to be timid. All the lights were lit in the houses and there was no one to see him. He walked past for a few yards and then came back.

"Good evening," he said. "Could you put me up for the night?"

A red-faced, hairy man of about forty was sitting in front of a brazier taking his evening dram.

"It's a small place," the man replied, peering up at Eiichi, "but you can stop if you want to. Had your supper?"

"Not yet," said Eiichi.

"I'll give ye a pot," said the man, "and ye can make a fire in that brazier and cook it."

"How about rice and charcoal?" asked Eiichi.

"How much rice do ye want?" asked the man. "Can ye eat a pint?"

"Yes, about that will do," said Eiichi.

The man measured out a pint of rice from a chest below the dark Buddhist altar and put it in an earthenware pot.

"Ye can wash the rice at the well out at the back," he said as he handed it to Eiichi.

Out at the back a woman was tending a fire in a stove. She looked at Eiichi for a moment when he went out. Eiichi, thinking that this was the first time in his life that he had washed rice, drew some water from the well as he looked across the rice-fields. A slight drizzle was falling and Mount Seimi could be only dimly discerned. It was a sorrowful, wet scene, and yet there was an indescribable charm about it.

While Eiichi was washing the rice he thought what a romantic person he was. Romance! . . . Freedom of the will! . . . There was something sad about it. And yet, what happiness was his! Yes, happiness! Never had he experienced such a delightful moment. He was actually going to cook his own rice on that rainy night.

He washed the rice and took it in.

"I'll give ye some charcoal," said the landlord. "I reckon two sen worth will be enough for ye."

The man gave him the charcoal and telling him he would show him where the brazier was, pushed back the screens of a room neighbouring the small basement. The room was about three yards by five in size, with a dim lamp hanging in the middle, and was so dark that you could not see into the corners. But Eiichi made out that there were three couples sleeping in the room. One couple had a child sleeping between them, and another couple had taken off their clothes and spread them on top of the coverlet. Although there were mosquitoes in the room, there did not appear to be any mosquito curtain. In the corner by the door there was a metal brazier.

"That's it," said the landlord, pointing.

Fortunately there were some sparks of fire in the brazier and Eiichi's charcoal, when he put it in, began to burn. He thought the cooking of the rice would be a long process, so he sat down in front of the brazier, but still the sight of the three couples sleeping was before his eyes.

In about seventeen or eighteen minutes the pot began to boil.

He wondered whether he ought to take the lid off, and as he thought the fire would go out if he did not, he took it off and watched the water boiling.

A voice seemed to cry in his head "Free! Free!" Philosophical questions were too puzzling, he felt. Henceforward he would only have the joy of objective existence, and he watched in wonder the grains of rice jumping about as though they were wrestling with each other. Still the voice in his head cried "Free! Free!"

The rice was done. He could begin to eat, and he took the cup and chopsticks he had borrowed, and the pickled plums and dried fish that the landlord had brought, and began to eat eagerly.

Just as he had begun to eat a close-cropped man of about fifty, with almond eyes, came in. His face was the colour of copper and he was apparently fond of saké. Yet there was something attractive about him. He seemed a little startled when he saw Eiichi, but Eiichi showed no concern.

"Good evening," said Eiichi, nodding.

"Good evening," said the man. "Raining hard, isn't it?"

He came into the room and sat down by the side of the brazier, at which he lit his pipe.

"Excuse me," he said, "but where do you live?"

"I live here," said Eiichi, "but I was born at Kobé."

"Oh! Kobé's just across the water, isn't it?"

"And you?" asked Eiichi.

"I come from Etchu."

"That's a very long way," said Eiichi. "What are you doing here?"

The man gazed into the fire and was silent for a moment. Then with a glance round him, he said: "Well, I travel round the country promoting afforestation. Only, for the time being . . ."

He paused a moment.

"Promoting afforestation," thought Eiichi. "How big he talks," and he looked at him and saw that his shirt was torn, and that his short-sleeved, lined kimono was patched in places. His appearance was certainly not very presentable.

"What sort of places do you go to in your propaganda work?" he asked aloud.

"Don't speak so loud," said the man. "Everybody's asleep." Apparently he did not wish to be overheard. The man's behaviour appeared to Eiichi very strange.

"I go from house to house," continued the man in a low voice, "spending three days at this village and five days at that, calling from house to house and preaching the principle of afforestation."

"Really?" said Eiichi, in approval. "That's a fine idea."

"And what's your business?" asked the man.

"I have no business," replied Eiichi. "I'm only a student. Lately I've been ill, so I'm just idling away the time."

"Yes? And where did you come from to-day?"

Eiichi was puzzled how to answer, and for a little time the two were silent. It had apparently started raining heavily again, for there was a tremendous noise outside. Eiichi somehow felt very excited; his blood boiled in his veins.

"What sort of people are these sleeping here?" he asked in a low voice, putting his head close to that of his companion.

"They're all beggars," replied the man, casting a look behind him. His manner in answering indicated that although he was lodging in the same house with beggars he did not regard himself as belonging to the same station in life.

"Are they all married?" asked Eiichi.

"No, they always sleep that way at night. They don't bother themselves about such matters."

"Really," answered the astonished Eiichi. "Are they all beggars?" he continued. "How can they manage to live?"

"They go round in the daytime begging rice, getting a little here and a little there till they get a dozen quarterns or so, and then they come here and sell it for three or four sen a quartern."

Eiichi was lost in wonder; the talk was more interesting than his supper, although the rice and dried fish were unexpectedly delicious. He had four helpings and reserved the remainder for the morrow's breakfast.

"Where are you going to-morrow?" asked the man in a somewhat louder voice.

"I really don't know," replied Eiichi. "I like to wander about."

"People won't believe in me and my mission," said the man, speaking half to himself. "That's what bothers me."

"Why?" said Eiichi, as he put his cup and chopsticks away in the corner.

"Well, my appearance is against me," said the man, noting Eiichi's new kimono.

"Oh, nothing matters," said Eiichi, amused, "as long as you adhere to your principles."

"People in this world cannot read your heart," answered the man.

"Unless you disregard the opinion of others you cannot achieve your object in this world," said Eiichi, as if he were reading the old man's heart. "The important thing is to be true to yourself."

"That's true," said the man in a changed tone. "I was a priest at the Korinji Temple in Etchu, but the priests to-day give themselves up to sensual pleasures in such a deplorable way that it's better to live like a beggar. For the sake of our country it is certainly better to sacrifice ourselves. So I left the temple and undertook the task of promoting afforestation, the importance of which had not occurred to other people. It is ten years this year since I left the temple, and all that time I have suffered all sorts of hardships and privations. . . . One is forced to think that the people of this world are all fools."

"Really?" said Eiichi. "You must have had a hard struggle."

"Yes, I have had a very hard time."

"But what are your ideas on afforestation?"

"Well, there's really nothing very abstruse about them. In our country trees are plentiful, but if the trees are all cut down for lumber, not only will the fine scenery be spoilt but the air of the towns will be rendered impure. Moreover, wood for building houses will become scarce. Therefore, it is necessary that all kinds of trees should be planted. Kiri comes first on the list of trees that we should cultivate, as it grows so quickly that it only takes thirty years for it to grow to a useful size. If each person in a house planted a kiri tree, what would be the result? That is what I go about the country asking. Japan has a population of fifty millions, and if everybody planted a tree, the result would be that there would be fifty million kiri trees. In thirty years these trees would be worth five yen each, and as five fives are twenty-five, there would be a capital of two hundred

and fifty million yen, which would be a very good way of making money when Japan was impoverished by war, while neglecting it means additional poverty. After the war with China, therefore, I resolved to lay it before the country. But it's very difficult to get people to listen."

His face wrinkled in a sombre smile and he bent his head as he filled his pipe.

On the other side of the screens they heard angry shouts from the landlord, but at whom he was shouting they had no idea. The saké was beginning to take effect.

This old man, Eiichi thought, had the youthful, patriotic spirit of Don Quixote. Yes, in these old men born in the feudal age a quixotic fervour bubbled up. Bushido had its roots in quixotism,—a solitary life. This old priest, with his unquenchable earnestness, appeared to him like a kiri tree which was withering in winter, dropping leaf after leaf, its thin grey-green trunk standing erect, with only two or three branches projecting from the upper part of its trunk, shivering in the west wind. Yet he couldn't help wondering whether the old man were an impostor. Nevertheless the class of people to be met with in common lodging-houses pleased him.

"And what has been the result?" he asked.

But just at that moment there was a sound of something tumbling down the stairs and a woman was heard shrieking. The landlord was raving and crying, "You b——h!"

Eiichi stood up and opened the screen. At the bottom of the staircase, by the side of the shrine, a woman was lying crying. From above three or four brutal faces were peeping down, their eyes glittering. They were a party of navvies. The landlord, with an impenetrable face, was again pouring himself out some saké.

"What's all the row about?" said one of the men at the top of the stairs, and then other voices broke in:—"Sounded like some one being dragged downstairs"—"She was trying to bunk upstairs"—"She got as far as 'ere."

The old priest sat smoking his pipe composedly. The affair did not seem to excite him at all.

"It's the same every night," he said. "It's a great nuisance. Low-class people." Eiichi had a feeling that he was witnessing

a scene in one of Gorki's novels. He had a sense of oppression as of a weight on his chest. Yet the common lodging-houses were full of life; blood ran swiftly there.

"That's nothing," said the man. "The night before last, for instance, there was a terrible fight. The son came home. Apparently that woman is not the landlord's real wife. The son seems to be the child of the first wife. . . ."

Eiichi wanted to hear more of the old man's adventures, which seemed to him like a dream.

"What has been the result of your propaganda?" he asked for the second time.

"I can't do anything now," was the reply. "I look like a beggar, so people won't believe in me."

Eiichi went to shut the screen and glancing out saw the landlord quaffing his saké as though it were nectar. Eiichi felt as though he too were thirsty. The six beggars were sleeping quietly.

"I suppose, in short," he said, "that it's your appearance that keeps people from believing in you."

"Yes, I suppose that's it. A month ago I had my scapulary, but while I was sleeping at a common lodging-house one night some one took my purse and other things, and I had only my scapulary left, so I had to leave it to pay my bill. Now I'm reduced to this ragged kimono. It's no wonder people won't believe in me."

"Yes, that's it," said Eiichi. "What do you say to exchanging kimonos?"

"You're only joking," said the priest. "What, my lousy old kimono for your fine one?" and he would not listen to it.

"Come," said Eiichi, "let's change—that is, if you don't mind," he insisted earnestly.

"Don't joke with me," said the priest, protesting loudly.

Eiichi thought that he would like to do something romantic.

"Come," he said, "how is it to be? What does it matter to me about a kimono or two? I don't care even if I go naked. Won't you take what I offer you? Then perhaps you don't know how to give to others."

Eiichi gave the affair a chivalrous atmosphere.

"You greatly surprise me," said the priest very earnestly, "and if you put it that way I really can't refuse. Come, I will accept

your offer. But you are really extraordinary. One does not often meet people like you in the world."

Eiichi took off his clothes and sat down by the brazier. The old priest also took off his kimono. Then the two smiled at each other and were silent. Outside it was raining heavily. Eiichi had done a romantic deed. He had given his clothes to another like a saint. He felt as if he were a saint himself; and smiling at the thought he rolled himself up in the wafer-like quilt and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXII

Eiichi Leaves Home



EARLY the following morning while it was still dark, Eiichi left the thin quilt he had hired for the night for five sen and, dressing himself in the ragged kimono, boldly returned to his father's house.

As he walked quickly along Omichi, from the foot of the Kompira Temple on Mount Seimi, he thought that really great people have reserves of energy and are not easily frightened at anything. "Life is merely a mime," he thought. "No special attention is paid to goodness; wickedness is certainly not considered bad, and when wickedness is no longer censured, sympathy is felt with it and there is no scruple at doing wicked deeds. Virtue, on the other hand, like a jewel, grows rarer. Then is the crisis in life. A saint or a rascal? If neither, that is the time a man becomes a criminal."

Thinking of these things he came to the gate of the house. It was half-past five in the morning.

Eiichi's attempt to set fire to the house had caused great excitement the day before, and his father had stayed at home consulting with Umé as to what it would be best to do with Eiichi. As they could not hit on any plan to dispose of him they called in Hiroshi Miki, the doctor, and, warning him that he was not to let anybody know, they told him of Eiichi's mad act.

Miki inquired into all the circumstances, and then, without further ado, suggested that Eiichi should be sent to a lunatic asylum.

"If it gets into the papers that my son has gone mad with love," said the Mayor, smiling, "it will injure me in my office as Mayor, and it would therefore be best to dispose of him privately as far as possible."

There being no other plan, however, they decided to send

him to the Minatogawa Asylum at Kobé, as there was no lunatic asylum at Tokushima.

That was why they were all sleeping so peacefully that morning.

When the gate was opened Eiichi went in. He asked the servant whether his father was still sleeping, and being told that he was, Eiichi went into the back room.

In the back room the night-light was still burning and Masunori, Umé and his father were still sleeping. Eiichi sat down quietly by his father's pillow.

"Father," he said, "I am here—Eiichi. I have come back as I have something I wish to tell you."

He spoke in as gentle a voice as possible and touched his father to wake him up. In a little time his father opened his eyes and, speaking as if still half asleep, said: "Is that you, Eiichi? I've got some business with you to-day, so don't go out."

He spoke very gently.

"What business have you with me, father?" asked Eiichi.

But his father hid his head under the coverlet and was silent. That his father, who generally ignored him, should say this seemed to Eiichi remarkably suspicious. He waited for a little time in silence till his father, thrusting his head out of the coverlet, looked at Umé.

"I've got some business with you to-day, Eiichi," he said, "so you mustn't leave the room upstairs."

He gave the order sternly.

"Master, the post has come," said the servant, and she brought the letters to his bedside.

Eiichi thought that there must be a letter from Tsuruko among them, and with his heart beating fast he looked at the four or five letters that the servant had brought. Was there a letter? He noticed one envelope that contained a thick, heavy letter and thought that must be it.

"This is my letter," he said, and took it up and broke the seal.

While he was reading it his limbs trembled and he felt greatly excited. It seemed to him that Tsuruko had no real regard for him. She repeated many times that she intended to pass the remainder of her life in celibacy, and under her words he read some dissatisfaction with the Niimi family. Not that she meant

to break off the connection with Eiichi, but she had no longer the courage to keep love at white heat. Yet she seemed to be anxious that it should not grow cold. The whole tone of the letter was negative. Eiichi felt as if he had been cast out of the world. "If I had only known," he cried inwardly, and he thought sorrowfully that he had been betrayed by Tsuruko. Well, it could not be helped. She referred repeatedly to the school regulations, and how she could not continue to carry on the correspondence. In a postscript she added that the letter had been written by the light in the passage after the order for "lights out" had been given.

Reading the letter was so unbearable that he jumped up and thought he would go upstairs to his study. He threw open the screens and went upstairs, but was surprised to find that his study had been turned upside down and was now being used as a place for airing the quilts. His anger made Tsuruko's faithlessness to him still more unbearable, and he could not restrain his tears. He rushed into the other room and threw himself down and wept,—long, long,—till his cheeks ached. But still his tears fell. They left him trembling all over. He must have been crying a long time he thought when Masunori came upstairs.

"Father says you mustn't go to school to-day," said Masunori.

Eiichi asked himself why, but could find no explanation. Only dread of the future and apprehensions caused by the upsetting of his room mingled together in his imagination and made his pulse beat faster. But that would not do. To fear the future or to tremble because his room had been thrown into disorder was unworthy of a man of principle, he thought, and he got up and went to the window and looked out at the clear morning sky, thinking how well it harmonised with the green of the old pine trees growing along the river bank. Somebody had put her head out of a window in the dormitory of the girls' needlework school and was looking in his direction. How impudent, he thought, and with the idea that he was quite unsuited to live in such a shameless world, he withdrew into the room again and sat down in a corner. He read Tsuruko's letter again, and while he was reading it his father came upstairs calling, "Eiichi, where are you?" But Eiichi did not reply.

"Eiichi," said his father, when he found him sitting in the

corner, "as your mind is upset I think you'd better give up the school for a time and rest. What do you say?"

His father's colour had changed.

"Father," replied Eiichi, "my mind is not upset in any way. I am not mad or anything like it."

His father stared at the ragged kimono Eiichi was wearing.

"Why then did you set the house on fire and cut the pillars in the alcove?" he asked angrily.

Eiichi expected this question.

"I wish you nothing but well, father," he said. "I want you to understand what is in my heart."

His father gave a scornful laugh.

"Wish me well?" he said harshly. "You're mad. How can you help me?"

"If my father did not give himself up to pleasure with Umé and other women," said Eiichi, speaking as if to himself in a mournful voice, "I should not be mad."

He was silent for a time, but the thought was running through his head, "I suppose people of my sort are always considered mad."

"What's that kimono you've got on?" asked his father. "Can you say you're not mad when you come back in a kimono like that?" and he laughed again.

"Eiichi," went on his father in a somewhat changed tone, "even if your mind is now clear, when it gets disturbed again it will give us great anxiety. While your mind is calm and until there is no more danger of your going mad you must enter an asylum."

At hearing himself sentenced to be taken to a lunatic asylum, Eiichi suddenly stood up and approached his father.

"Go to an asylum?" he said, staring at his father. "Yes, I will go; I will do as you say. If you are afraid lest I hurt you or your wife I will do as you tell me. . . . Only, when will my father do as I want him to?"

Eiichi hesitated for a moment and then boldly went up to his father and caught hold of his sleeve, as if he had become a child with a child's simplicity again.

"Father," he asked, "why are you sending me to such a place as an asylum?"

But his father only glared at him.

"When your expression becomes like that of other persons," he said, "I will take you out. Let go of me. Let go, let go, I say," and his father tried to tear himself away.

"Father," said Eiichi, "we shall not meet again. Your road and mine lie far apart. I will take leave of you, father. I must follow my road in haste. Follow you the old road that leads to destruction. Instead of a small asylum I am going into the big lunatic asylum that is called the world. I must bid you farewell. Good-bye, father—good-bye, O father that brought me into the world. Accept this my parting salutation, for it is the last time that I shall look upon you."

Then bowing to his father Eiichi dried his tears and left the house.

Outside the morning sun was shining and unconsciously Eiichi murmured, "How is it that such darkness reigns within the Japanese household when all outside is so bright?"

That night, after having borrowed a little money from his aunt, Eiichi travelled third-class on the steamer to Kobé. He was still dressed in the beggar-priest's ragged robe.

CHAPTER XXIII

In the Depths



EIICHI landed at Kobé, but refrained from calling at the office in Kajiya-cho. Instead he went directly to the labour exchange in Minato-machi, which sent him to a dockers' lodging-house in Higashide-machi.

Eiichi believed that this was the bitter cup that he was destined to drink. When he asked the head of the labour exchange to send him to a factory somewhere, he was told that as business was dull there was no opening anywhere, but finally he was sent to the dockers' lodging-house in Higashide-machi.

Life in the dockers' lodging-house was very hard. There were, on an average, two men for every mat, and they were put to sleep in small, low-ceilinged rooms that were like store-rooms. Eiichi's ideas of revolution, Socialism, and idealism disappeared in a flash. He saw that the workers were too degraded to permit of social reform. He was sent every day to help the dockers; one time he had to carry pieces of pig-iron on his shoulder. His ideal was to look after the winches, but he realised that it was only an ideal. He saw that even to become a dock-labourer required some training, and he soon got the nickname of "Greenhorn" in the lodging-house. He thought that the work which would suit him best would be carrying cement for the tilers. He applied for such work every day, and finally he was hired by a labourer who worked in the district from Wakinohama to Mikagé. His idealism was certainly dead, but in that position he thought that he would try to spend his days happily.

He soon made an acquaintance. This was an ex-convict who had served two sentences,—a man named Sakai, about fifty years of age, who was foreman of the labourers. This man for some reason was particularly kind to him. After he had been fifteen

days in the dockers' lodging-house Eiichi began to look forward with some pleasure to receiving his wages, but at the end of the month he was disappointed. It did not take him long to learn the craftiness of the lodging-house keeper. When the end of the month came Eiichi, for twenty-three days' work, was able to get only two yen and thirty sen, the lodging-house keeper taking the remainder for himself on some pretext or other.

Eiichi longed to see the papers. For nearly a month he had not seen anything in the shape of a paper, nor had he received even a single letter. His shirt was alive with lice, but when he got back from his work he had not the energy left to wash his clothes. Even climbing the stairs exhausted him. He was too tired to change into a kimono, so that every other night or so he slept as he was. Sometimes he was so overwrought that he could not sleep. At such times his companions drank saké. Eiichi envied them, but he had not the courage to drink saké himself. Many of the men when they came back from their work went to Shinkaichi to see the moving-pictures. Some of them went down to loiter about the brothels at Fukuhara. But Eiichi had no energy left even to walk another hundred yards. Some of the men told smutty stories about prostitutes, but Eiichi was dead to all sexual desire; he had become sexless. He had no ideals, no desires, no hopes, no friends. Culture, newspapers, money, clothes, health, peaceful rest, books,—all had gone. He styled himself a "negative saint"; he was really a saint. He ought to have received sixty-five sen a day in wages, but that was only nominal, for his board cost him fifty sen a day and this left him with the small sum of fifteen sen a day for himself. Even that fifteen sen he could not call his own. His hair had grown long, but there was no need to get it cut. His chin was hairy, but he had no desire to get it shaved. He often stopped in front of the window of a big shop or at a glass door to look with pity at his shabby figure. But he was resigned to his fate.

He wanted to revile society; his descent to the very dregs of society had shown him how to revile it. But he had no pen, no paper, no desk, no electric light. At the lodging-house twenty people were crammed into a room of ten mats to sleep and there was one electric light of five candle-power for the room.

At the place where he went to work there was a man nicknamed "One String Masa" from some physical defect, who

bullied Eiichi to his fill every day. This man was very proud of being head man of the second fire brigade, and at work he talked about nothing but fires, till Eiichi, who thought the talk was trifling, did not take the trouble to answer him. Masa thereupon decided that "Greenhorn was proud," and ordered him about in a very brutal way. One day Masa grumbled at Eiichi's slowness in bringing up the cement and tried to push him off the roof, but luckily Eiichi caught hold of the scaffolding and saved himself from falling to the ground. When Masa began to bully him Sakai always came to his aid, for which Eiichi was very grateful. He always began to cry when he was bullied like that, and wanted to pray to God to release him from his misery quickly. But now that he found himself sunk into an existence more excruciating than that of a slave, he had not the faith to pray to God. He found a pencil some one had dropped in the room and a copy of "Industrial Japan," and he wrote in it a "Diary of a Slave."

This "Diary of a Slave" was truly a very miserable one. Out of the depths Eiichi cursed existence. At one time he contemplated suicide; at another he thought of Socialism. But a socialistic state would be unendurable, he thought, if a man like "One String Masa" were dictator.

With the first money that he received after he went to the lodging-house—two yen and thirty sen—he bought a second-hand coat. That cost him two yen. With the fifteen sen left he had his hair cropped short. This removed the personal discomfort from which he had long been suffering, and he paid a visit to the office in Kajiya-machi, as he wanted to see a file of newspapers for the past month. Naturally he also wanted to inquire about his father.

Murai, dressed in foreign clothes, was sitting in the office alone, busily writing a letter, when Eiichi went in, and until Eiichi bent over the counter he took no notice of him.

"Good-day, Mr. Murai," said Eiichi, bowing.

"Ah, Bonbon, is it?" said Murai in a cold tone. "What have you come for? Have you written to your father?"

"No. Has any message come from him?"

"The other day, when your father was going to Tokyo, he called in here and I asked after you. He said that he had had no communication from you since you left the house a fort-

night before. So you're in Kobé, are you? Since you've cut your hair I shouldn't have known you at first sight. How thin you've grown and sunburnt! Where are you living?"

"Was father anxious?"

"No, not particularly," answered Murai, and he went on writing his letter very busily. He did not show himself at all friendly, but Eiichi took no notice. He knew that as he had no money or influence he could not expect to receive any respect from the world. Nevertheless he was surprised at the difference between his reception when he came back from Tokyo and that he received now. Grieved at heart, he had not the courage to ask to see the papers, but returned dejected to the lodging-house in Higashide-machi, where he rolled himself in his thin quilt and wept. Murai had asked him for his address, but Eiichi had gone away without answering.

After that there was a succession of misfortunes to Eiichi. He got injured at his work almost every day and was bullied by "One String Masa." Nevertheless there were times when he had visions. In the middle of the day, when he carried up the cement to the roof, the noonday sun shone from above and made the tiles sparkle like jewels. Such moments brought him the thought that there was something sacred in labour and gave him a religious fervour.

There was neither progress nor growth. His life seemed to him like a copper wire; it had only extension in time. There was no development, and he had neither hope nor anything else.

Then it began to rain continuously, and all the men idled away their time in the lodging-house every day. Gambling was rife. The only two who did not gamble were a sickly man of thirty-two, known as "Sanuki," and Eiichi. There were fights also nearly every day. One day there was a funeral. A worker had met a sudden death in the workshops at the Kawasaki Ship-building Yard by being hit by an iron plate. That funeral made Eiichi think of the hard lot of the workers.

Every day the rain fell, and for nine days the men were unable to do any work, while in the meantime they were running into debt for their boarding expenses. To pay off the debt Eiichi would have to work two months for nothing, and he thought of Lassalle's "iron law of wages." It was more than

that; it was "the hell of wages." When he passed an old-clothes shop or a cake shop, for the first time in his life he felt an inclination to steal. He examined his limbs and his form and mourned over his miserable condition. He was reduced to such a state that the reform of society or anything else was impossible to him. Any idea of a Labour movement seemed to him a mere dream. The Japanese labourer was too exhausted for any one to arouse him.

Every day he went through the same exhausting routine. He forgot what day of the month it was, even what day of the week it was.

It was on the afternoon of the first day after it had stopped raining, when he was returning with a lot of other men from the Yamaguchi building yard at Wakinohama, that he unexpectedly ran up against Hozumi of the Hyogo office by the bank of the River Uji. Of course Hozumi did not know him; it was Eiichi who spoke first. As Eiichi was dressed in a workman's coat, with the badge of his employer on his back, and wore straw sandals, Hozumi was surprised.

"Bonbon," he said, "what are you doing like that? What a queer chap you are!"

Hozumi was making fun of him, but Eiichi did not take any notice of it.

"Go home," went on Hozumi. "I'll make up some good excuse for you. But I say, Bonbon, the master's very ill. They say it's all up with him—typhoid fever, they say. Eiichi boy, get back home. What an undutiful son you are. I shouldn't like to have so much learning if it makes people like that."

"What? My father ill? Do they say it's hopeless?"

"I expect every day when I get home to find a telegram saying he's dead."

Eiichi was plunged into distress.

"If a telegram comes saying my father's dead," he said at last, "I wish you'd let me know."

His voice was choked with sobs.

"Of course I will. Ain't you his heir? But, Eiichi boy, where be you really? Murai told me the other day that you'd come to the office looking very seedy and that's all I've heard. Where be you really? I'd have let you know about your father sooner if I'd known where you were."

Eiichi felt very grateful for Hozumi's kindness and told him where he was boarding, with details as to how to find it.

"I know, I know," said Hozumi. "Ye're there, are ye? That house belongs to Shibata, who's chief of the second fire brigade. I know the chap."

The same evening, when Eiichi was standing in the small basement of the Shibata lodging-house eating his supper, there came a messenger from the Niimi office with a letter from Murai. It was an announcement of the death of his father.

Eiichi left his supper half-eaten and went to seek the lodging-house keeper, Shibata, telling him the facts and asking if he might go. Then out came the crisp-haired wife of Shibata, with a squint in her almond eyes.

"Ye owes us four yen fifty sen," she said. "Ye'll pay us that afore ye goes, won't ye?"

Eiichi then told them, for the first time, about the office at Hyogo, and asked them to send some one with him at once to get the money. The person whom they told to go with Eiichi to get the money happened to be "One String Masa." The woman expressed her doubts unceasingly about the truth of the story, but "One String Masa" and Eiichi set off in silence. They walked from Higashide-machi to Kajiya-machi, but during the whole twenty minutes it took them to do this they did not exchange a word with each other.

Murai paid Eiichi's debt, and "One String Masa," with a surprised expression on his face, received the money and went away.

That evening Eiichi returned by steamer to Tokushima. Murai went with him, but Eiichi did not look at him or talk to him. He had seen "Sanuki" die at the lodging-house and he did not think that his father's death was particularly important. He had come to learn that one must have a will like iron when one sinks to the bottom of society.

On the day of the funeral Eiichi tried to show as much indifference as possible, but at the Zuigan Temple burial ground, when the priests from twelve temples, with Eiichi following, circled the coffin three times, he could not restrain his grief. As he walked in silence in the funeral procession all his relations with his father unrolled before him like a panorama. Beyond what Hamlet felt when he saw the funeral procession of Ophelia, Eiichi thought, was the dread reality, and he wept with awe and

grief. Everything was awe-inspiring:—the unmusical clash of the cymbals, the chanting of the scriptures. As Eiichi listened to the mysterious funeral music, he made a resolve,—that he would jump across the death-line and fight against convention, procrastination, tradition, and sophistry.

Before him was the great world,—the world which Eiichi had told his dead father was an enormous lunatic asylum,—tormented by the paranœa of militarism and capitalism:—a lunatic asylum co-extensive with the earth. Regardless of whether he or the world were mad, Eiichi determined that henceforth he would fight against those things.

CHAPTER XXIV

In Business



EIICHI'S father had died without making a will, and when the family came to investigate his affairs they found to their great astonishment that his land and houses were mortgaged two or three times over. Eiichi took no part in the family council, but continued to study day after day. For two weeks he was puzzled to know what would become of them all. Then one day, his uncle Yasui of Osaka asked Eiichi to tell him the whole state of affairs. He was greatly taken aback when Eiichi told him the details one by one.

"You'll have to run the office at Hyogo yourself," he said, adding kindly, "I'll help you. I'll take the two boys Masunori and Yoshinori, so you needn't be anxious about them. I feel sorry for your stepmother in the country, but she's got a goodish bit saved and she'll have to go and live in that house we've kept for her at the back."

His uncle had forgotten all about Emi, which was quite natural, as Emi had not been informed of her father's death and had not come home.

Everything was thus arranged. The big house passed into the hands of Masuda of Torimachi, to whom it had been mortgaged; the stepmother went to live in the small house, and the big outhouse and the sheds for fermenting indigo were pulled down; Masunori and Yoshinori went to Osaka; and Umé opened a restaurant with two thousand five hundred yen that was given her. Eiichi himself went to the office at Hyogo.

Eiichi did not think that he had any talent for business, and, of course, he had no inclinations that way. But he had not the courage to plunge among the lower classes. The workers' boarding-house and the cheap lodging-house were too gloomy for him. Moreover he told himself that it was important for him to have some practical experience for the realisation of his principles, so

he did what his uncle told him and made an effort to forget those horrible months that he had spent at the dockers' lodging-house.

When he went to the office at Hyogo, Eiichi was conscious that he was in another world. He was master now; he might even be called a capitalist. But it took him a long time to project his inner self upon the outer world, and he thought painfully that he had not yet found his real self. His resolve now was that he would merge his identity in the social life around him. The courage and fervour that inspired him at the beginning of May had now disappeared. He was fast bound by the authority of the outer world, unable to cry or even sob, with the feeling of one about to sink to the bottom of a deep ocean. Of late he had come to think that his identity was being destroyed.

No more letters had come from Tsuruko during the months of his homeless life and he had himself not been able to send her a letter. Love had been cast aside as a sort of sin during that period; he thought that the ordeal of such a strenuous life would be unendurable to a weak thing like a woman, and that they could not together face the hardships of the future. Strangely enough he could forget love by day,—or, at least, try to forget it.

When he went out into the busy city and began his business as a carrier he was not without some consciousness that he lacked stability. At school, it did not matter so much, as a school had only remote relations with real life; but now a stable base was necessary. What should it be? It must be strong. Woman? The woman-soul? Eiichi searched his heart. He could not now win fame. Disappointed in love, his identity was gradually being dissolved. From the wings that he had spread for a flight in the infinite the feathers were falling one by one and the tendons were beginning to snap.

He began work as a transport agent. Like old Faust he turned his face towards the sea. Where was his Mephistopheles lurking? In what lay the secret danger? Where was the dyke being built that would dry up the sea?

Eiichi did not take his stand upon authority; he was as humble as possible, whether at the offices of the steamship companies or at his own office, or when he went from vessel to vessel in the harbour. It was not the time to apply the principles of Socialism

or claim the liberty of the Anarchist. On the deck of the big steamship *Minnesota* Eiichi felt his own insignificance.

Eiichi rose at five o'clock every morning to study. At eight o'clock he went out with Rokuya, the apprentice, to superintend the working of cargo, and he never got back before eight o'clock in the evening. At night, when he got home, he did not touch any meat or saké. Nor did he seek after any one to love; his interest in love had not yet revived. It was true that he felt lonely without women's society—especially after he got to Kobé, —but he thought that he would soon get tired of it. A woman was merely a creature with a nice complexion, a soft skin and pretty features, who inspired men with a pleasant feeling; he doubted whether that feeling would outlast five or ten years. Books were the thing; and as business was good he ordered a number of his favourite philosophical works from Maruzen, the bookseller in Tokyo. When he got back from his work he lay on his side among his books, sipping egg and milk, and reading the reviews in the foreign magazines till the servant, who was a woman of about forty from Awaji, came to tell him that supper was ready. When he sat at the table and ate his vegetarian meal he felt a little lonely. Of course there were no luxuries; one had to smack one's lips over laver. "Ah, if I only had a sister like Humé," he thought; but he had no sister,—not even a cat.

When Eiichi first arrived in Kobé he made immediate inquiries as to his sister Emi's whereabouts, but could not discover where she had hidden herself. Yoshitaro Yoshida, in whose care she had been placed, spoke of her as being very stupid and said that she had never been to see him.

When bedtime came Eiichi thought how nice it would be to have a friend. It made him feel sad to think that he had never had a friend. As for Tsuruko . . . when he remembered the hand-clasps and embraces—all the details of their intimacy in the past,—he thought that if they could eliminate sex Tsuruko would be the best friend he could have. He yearned after her. "Tsuruko was a fine girl," he murmured to himself, and felt a desire to seek her friendship. Tsuruko as his companion? The thought seemed to fill his breast with a divine freshness. Rolled in the quilts thinking of these things, and at times reading a book, he fell asleep.

Such was a day in his life. It was not an unpleasant one. To his assistant and his clerks and the servant he showed great consideration, and their affability increased. As his financial circumstances improved he increased the salaries of his clerks. He even had some idea of giving the clerks a share in the profits as the business developed if things went on well. Thus it could not be said that he had no pleasure.

This went on till the end of October. At the beginning of November he began to go to the theatre, as it occurred to him that he would like to study the life history of the people. One moonlight night in November he picked up a kitten. It was past midnight, when he was returning from the Aioi theatre, and the kitten was crying on a vacant piece of ground at Minatogawa. It was very young and its eyelids were still red. It had a narrow piece of red silk tied round its neck to which was fastened a bell, and it was frightfully thin, with black and white longish fur. Eiichi picked it up compassionately and put it in his bosom, whereupon the kitten stopped crying and began to purr. Then it began to make a great disturbance in his bosom, but Eiichi, laughing, let it have its own way. It climbed up his chest and looked into his face as if to fathom his thoughts. "Miaow" it cried and rubbed its damp, soft little nose against Eiichi's. It gave him a strange feeling, but he did not dislike it. After a little time the kitten mewed again and then went back into his bosom, sticking its head out as though it wanted to look at the moon. Eiichi felt as if he were embracing a loved one who was tired of life. The moonlight added to his pleasure, and he walked along Hon-machi, cherishing the kitten and thinking of all sorts of things. As the moonlight fell on the roofs of the houses the tiles where the dew was heaviest glistened in its rays, and the telegraph wires and poles were reflected in the road, producing shadows that looked like crests on white silk. In the moonlight even the streets looked beautiful, and Eiichi, as he went along nursing the kitten, was lost in contemplation of the beauty of the city-scene. All at once there appeared to him, like a vision, the drama which he had seen not long before,—the suicide of Hanshichi the publican and his sweetheart Sankatsu. The tiles on the roofs shone like silver.

The next morning the kitten caused a sensation in the office. "It's a tabby," said Hozumi, and at once there was a flow of jokes.

"Just the thing for the young master," chaffed Hosokawa. For four days, from morning till night, the kitten was a source of amusement. It always slept with Eiichi, and in the morning it crept up and looked into his face, putting its soft moist nose against Eiichi's and licking it. "A cat's kiss," Eiichi thought with amusement. On getting up he found it had made a mess in the bed. When he told this to the clerks they said that he was not the only one; the kitten had done it in their beds too. On the fourth day when it was raining, the cat made a mess quite boldly on Hozumi's coat. Thereupon Mr. Hozumi got in a great rage and ordered Rokuya to take the cat and leave it on the beach. Rokuya, who was a flat-faced youth, with a big nose and long thin lips, gave a derisive laugh and took the cat down to the beach. Generally Rokuya did not do what Hozumi asked him, but this time he thought he would see the end of the comedy and did what he was told. When the boy came back he waited, and when his young master asked him what was the matter, he said that he thought it was too cruel to leave the kitten homeless, so he had given it to the cakeman. There the first scene of the comedy ended.

One day at the end of November the clerks in the office began talking about brothels in front of the young master, and Hosokawa drew an indecent picture out of his tobacco-pouch and showed it to Eiichi. They had begun to get insolent through over familiarity. Eiichi saw no reason to fear temptation, but he did not like the tone of the conversation.

The night after the affair of the cat Eiichi went for a walk with Hozumi to the Nanko Shrine, and when Hozumi tried to drag him into the Daikyu, Eiichi made some polite excuse and started home. But Hozumi entered quite unabashed. Eiichi felt some regret that he was not as bold as Hozumi, and it occurred to him that in the study of social conditions it was necessary to see everything. He went back to the Daikyu therefore, and a singularly beautiful girl, with a coquettish air, came out and tried to pull him in.

"Your mate's gone in," she said, "so there ain't no use your going home."

She spoke in the Kobé dialect. Then another girl came out and began to pull him in. Hozumi also came out.

"Just come in for a little," he said. "We'll just stay a while and then we'll go home."

There seemed nothing else to be done so Eiichi went in. Hozumi was fondling a beautiful girl and making all sorts of jokes, but Eiichi did not take any notice. Then Hozumi told the girls about Eiichi's vegetarianism and all about the kitten, at which Eiichi was not displeased, and after a little time they went away, the two girls coming out to see them off and calling out "Come again, do now."

Eiichi was surprised at the undeniable fascination of the girls. Hozumi was telling him all sorts of tales about girls, but Eiichi thought that his self-control was unshaken.

CHAPTER XXV

A By-Election



AFTER the "New Era" and the Kashiwagi Socialist parties in Tokyo had separated, the publication of the *New Era* was suspended, but Mr. I. and Mrs. F. afterwards took it up and produced a small journal. Eiichi heard from a Socialist living in a remote part of Mikawa Province that the journal was continually being fined by the authorities for statements made in it which were deemed subversive of order, and he sent them ten yen as a trifle to help pay the fines. Eiichi thought it was necessary to disseminate democratic ideas more thoroughly in Japan in some way or other, but in his present position he found it impossible to do anything. More and more there appealed to him the idea of getting into closer touch with the poor somewhat on the principle of Toynbee, the English social reformer.

Eiichi wished to realise his heart's desire, but the temptations of his environment were too strong for him. He was also very much under the influence of the naturalistic literature which was just then coming into vogue. His submission to beauty and women somehow seemed to him something of which to be proud.

It was now the end of November. A by-election for a seat on the Municipal Council was taking place and Eiichi was told by Murai that he ought to take part. One of the candidates for election was the head of the Torii transport agency in Sakaémachi and as he was in the same line of business Eiichi was dragged, willy-nilly, into the contest. Eiichi consented to address one of the meetings. As it happened, there was only one public meeting from the beginning to the end of the election, and this was held at the Kikusuitei, a hall which would only hold about four hundred people, situated near the Fukuhara brothel. Most of the speakers were the proprietors of magazines and

journals which were published irregularly, mostly for the sake of the advertisements, some of them coming out only every three months so as not to come under the Press Law. They made a big show by their titles, such as the *Japan Hardware Journal*, the *Kwansai Soy Journal*, the *Lumber Review*, or the *Kobé & Osaka Shipchandlers' Gazette*, while some had specially grand names, such as *Great Japan of the Ocean*. The proprietors were a strange lot of half-baked politicians who made a specialty of local politics, and their speeches were very poor attempts. Eiichi, on the other hand, by the freshness of his views and the skilful way in which he set them forth, made a great impression on the audience. The next day the newspapers said that Mr. Eiichi Niimi had quite captured the audience by his eloquence. It may not have been specially due to Eiichi's speech, but at any rate Mr. Torii was elected three days after.

The feast in celebration of the election was held at the Tsutsukadan on Egeyama. Of course Mr. Niimi was invited to be present at the function, and Mr. Kobata, the proprietor of the *Marine Transporters' Monthly*, accompanied him. Eiichi went with Kobata to the Tsutsukadan, and there, for the first time in his life, was served with saké by geisha. He only drank one cup. Also for the first time in his life he saw geisha dance at a private gathering. It dawned upon him that people do not become dissipated wilfully.

There were thirty-one people present at the feast, including Mr. Torii, the successful candidate, and except Eiichi they were all the class of people described above,—proprietors of petty monthly journals and reporters. Eiichi had come to understand the condition of local politics. According to Murai, the successful candidate Torii was a scholar of Waseda Academy,* who had long been engaged in the transport business in Kobé. He seemed to be a gentlemanly fellow, but he did not enter into any intimate talk with Eiichi.

Kobata told every one present what he had heard from Murai,—that Eiichi was a great scholar, and Eiichi became quite popular in the gathering. Kobata seemed to know all about the geisha and told Eiichi, who was sitting next to him, all their names and introduced them to him.

* Waseda Academy (now Waseda University) in Tokyo was founded by the late Marquis Okuma.

It was nearly one o'clock before the feast was over and then Kobata invited Eiichi to come with him and three of the geisha to a second spree in the Hanakuma quarter. Eiichi, as a seeker after beauty, had not the heart to refuse, and so they went to the Hanakuma quarters, their jinrikishas stopping in front of the beautifully illuminated Tama-no-ya. As their jinrikishas stopped they could hear through the latticed door the high voices of the girls, and when they got out of the jinrikishas the girls came out to receive them. Here neither saké nor anything else was produced. One of the elder geisha who had the professional name of "Kiyonosuké," paid special attention to Eiichi, but Eiichi found "Kohidé," a girl who had come back with them from the Tsutsuikadan, the most beautiful. She was a girl of about twenty-one or twenty-two, of a modest behaviour and a quiet tongue. Among those who accompanied them back from the Tsutsuikadan was also a girl named "Umewaka," but she had a headache, she said, and soon went upstairs to bed.

Kobata said that he was going to stop the night there and recommended Eiichi to do the same. They were all seated together in front of a brazier, and Eiichi, as he inhaled the sweet scent of the girls and listened to their joking talk, felt that he had not the strength of mind to rise up and go home. Kiyonosuké also engagingly asked him to stay, as it was so late. Finally Kohidé gave the order for two beds to be made up side by side.

Eiichi thought the world was a surprisingly accommodating place. Although it was a geisha-house there was nothing vulgar or disgusting about it. Here there was a greater warmth and a richer feeling of humanity than in his father's house at Tokushima. He felt very grateful for all their kindness.

That night he slept in the same room with Kobata and left the next morning at eight o'clock. As he left Kiyonosuké asked if she might come to his office with Kohidé, and Eiichi assented.

CHAPTER XXVI

At the Geisha House



THE next day Kiyonosuké sent a very long letter by a jinrikishaman to Eiichi's office in Kajiya-machi and the ingenuous Eiichi showed it to every one in the office, from Murai down to the servant. They all thought it was a great joke.

That afternoon two very fine gentlemen, dressed in European clothes, came to the office in jinrikishas. Eiichi thought it rather strange, but learnt that they came from the Kobé Marine Insurance Company. Murai received them and after a long talk with him upstairs, lasting about an hour, they both went away. When they had gone Murai came to Eiichi, who was writing cargo invoices.

"Master," he said, "something terrible has happened."

"What is it?" asked Eiichi, surprised.

"The *Daiiuku-maru* was wrecked in the Enshu Sea in that storm we had about a week ago and broke her mast, lost her rudder and had to jettison a third of her cargo. While she was drifting about, the *Korea-maru* on the American line, discovered her and went to the rescue of the crew advising them to abandon the ship and cargo. The men, however, were reluctant to leave their old ship and the whole ten of them decided to stick by her. They were given some provisions and drifted on till the vessel neared Oshima Island in Izu. There the people on the island saw she was adrift and quickly launched a salvage boat. They took the vessel into the harbour and being a very rapacious lot they stole about half of what was left on board. The Kobé Marine Insurance Company got a telegram the day before yesterday and they have already sent some one to wherever the harbour is in Izu. They came to consult about the five hundred cases of ammonium from Tokyo for Maruni. They say about half of it is spoilt, but there are about two hundred cases

that the water has not got at and which are all right. The insurance company says it is not a case of a ship foundering, but of its drifting and as the crew threw the goods into the sea deliberately the company can't pay the insurance money on the whole, but ask us to accept some consolation money. Of course if you opened a hole in the bottom of the ship and she sank or all the cargo was lost, the whole amount of the insurance would be paid. I put it to them, supposing a hole was opened in the bottom of the ship where she now lies, would we get the full amount of the insurance, and they said in that case they would pay it."

"What a nuisance," said Eiichi. "Do the Maruni people know about it?"

"They said that they had called there on the way. The same thing happened to Ishida's ship off Kazarima in Harima Province when it was wrecked. The ammonium that was left they poured water on to spoil it and got the whole of the amount that the goods were insured for."

"Would it be quite right to do that?" Eiichi asked quickly. He thought the economics of capitalism rather queer.

"Oh, yes, there's no objection," said Murai. "According to the explanation of the Kobé Marine Insurance Company, the Maruni Company pays them every year about twenty-five thousand yen in insurance premiums, while they say that this cargo was insured for something under forty thousand yen. So as they want to continue being favoured with the business, if the ship is caused to sink or the whole of the cargo is rendered worthless, they will pay the full amount for which it was insured."

"That's a strange idea. I never heard it before."

"That's how it's done. As we can't very well sink the ship I think we had better throw the cargo overboard or spoil it with sea water."

While they were talking there was a telephone call from the Maruni office about the matter. Murai was thrown into great perplexity, for there being rather a scarcity of ammonium just then the Maruni Company wanted to have the goods, and yet at the same time they wanted to get the insurance money. In any case, they said, some one should be sent to investigate the state of affairs.

Eiichi and Murai talked the matter over and decided to send

Hozumi. They informed Maruni by telephone of the decision, and then Eiichi made a hurried dinner and went off quickly to look for Hozumi, who was out in the bay.

At half-past seven that evening, Hozumi, with a clerk of the Maruni Fertiliser Company, left Kobé on the second-class express for Oshima in Izu.

That evening Eiichi felt himself drawn to visit Kiyonosuké and Kohidé and he trudged along to the Hanakuma quarter. Somehow he felt very shy. Just as he was getting to Fukuhara-guchi he heard the sound of a drum and stopped to look. It was a band of gossellers preaching by the roadside. Eiichi's religious fervour was that evening especially aroused. He compared himself with the young men preaching and felt exasperated at his own lack of spirit. He gave up his visit to the Hanakuma quarter and went to the Gospel Mission Hall in Tamon-dori, where he listened to the preaching till the end. Eiichi was not particularly affected by the preaching, but he was very much struck by a worker's testimony. This worker appeared to be a man of weak intellect, a labourer at the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Yard, it was said;—a man of thirty-five or thirty-six, who earnestly proclaimed that he had been saved by Jesus Christ from a life of crime, and by his salvation had entered into a state of blessedness. Eiichi was much impressed. He thought of the bewildering indulgences of his present life and a resolution to become a Christian formed in his mind. But his philosophy blocked the way. He could feel no sympathy with the many religious mysteries for which no explanation was forthcoming, such as the Trinity, the Immaculate Conception, the Ascension and miracles.

The pastor was a tall, slender man of about forty in appearance, very sentimental, or, rather, hysterical, who repeated the same thing over and over again and called for recruits for the "seat of grace" among those who wanted to be saved. There were only twenty or thirty people present, but two or three persons went boldly up. Eiichi wished that he had the courage to go up.

Eiichi felt that he must certainly repent, but that night the call of beauty, especially the temptation of seeing Kohidé, was stronger than the call of religion. That was the reason why Eiichi had not the courage to seek salvation and go to the "seat

of grace." He went out dejectedly and again proceeded quickly towards the Hanakuma quarter.

The Hanakuma quarter was lit up. "Why was the Gospel Mission Hall so dark inside," Eiichi thought, "while on the other hand the geisha quarter at Yamanoté is so bright?" Pretty girls were there in beautiful dresses, with large sparkling eyes and glossy black hair done up in wonderful coiffures, who brushed past him in the narrow passages, giving Eiichi an inexpressible feeling of delight.

At the Tama-no-ya Kiyonosuké and Kohidé told him that although they had received an invitation elsewhere they had been so certain that he would come that they had purposely excused themselves and had been waiting for him. When he heard this Eiichi thought it was a pity that he had not come earlier.

Kohidé was from Akita and was very beautiful. She seemed more than ordinarily beautiful that evening, and Eiichi felt that even to sit by her side was a great privilege. Eiichi, Kohidé, Kiyonosuké and the mistress sat round the brazier. The mistress did not look a bit like the ordinary mistress of a geisha-house; she looked like the wife of a merchant. Kobata had told Eiichi after they went to bed that she was the mistress of a hatter somewhere in Moto-machi.

Tea and cake were served and Kiyonosuké hesitatingly suggested that they thought of getting Eiichi to take them to the theatre. Eiichi did not reply, however, and his silence cast a chill on the company. His desire was rather to amuse himself with Kohidé as freely as he used to play at love with Tsuruko, but Kiyonosuké's ardour prevented him. Kiyonosuké went on chattering alone. The talk getting round to Kobata, Kohidé dismissed him with the remark that she did not like him. Kiyonosuké also did not like him. Kohidé imitated the way Kobata smoked. Kiyonosuké said that Kobata's way of smoking was very like the Mayor's.

Then they began picking the Mayor to pieces. Kiyonosuké told a story about how embarrassed the Mayor was in offering his congratulations at the celebration of the completion of a new house that a Nada brewer named Yagi had built as a separate establishment for his mistress. Kohidé asked Eiichi if he had not seen the sarcastic remarks made about the Mayor in the Kobé papers the next day. Eiichi answered that he had

not seen them and Kohidé told him what the paper said. Eiichi thought that it was not only the Mayor of Tokushima who was dissipated and smiled sardonically.

Then they began an attack on the Mayor. There came stories of his relations with geisha.

"I say," said Kohidé, breaking into the conversation in a loud voice, "do you know? Kobata's girl at the Maturaro goes backwards and forwards between Mr. Yamada, the head of the Public Works Office, and Mr. Shinoda, of the Japan Mail Steamship Company."

Kiyonosuké opened her eyes wide.

"Does Yamada go with girls?" she asked.

"Um."

"Hasn't he some children?"

"Yes, they say he has five."

"Then why does he go out amusing himself?"

"Oh, he goes out when his wife's expecting another."

Then Eiichi heard from Kiyonosuké all about the gaieties of Mr. Shinoda of the Japan Mail Steamship Company. He smiled sardonically when he heard of the secret life of Shinoda, remembering his affected assumption of superiority.

While they were talking Umewaka came back and began telling them what had happened at the banquet she had been to. She was delighted because Mr. Nakao had promised to take her to the theatre the following night.

When Kohidé heard this she petitioned Eiichi to take her to the theatre the following night. Eiichi assented, whereupon Kiyonosuké wanted to go too and Eiichi had not the courage to refuse to take her. Umewaka asked what time it was, and the mistress, who was getting sleepy, said it was eleven o'clock. Umewaka at once announced that she was going to bed, whereupon Kiyonosuké proposed that Eiichi should stop the night, as they were all women in the house and felt lonely.

Eiichi again had not the courage to refuse, and accordingly they spread a bed for him. In the society of these girls, overcome by their perfume, Eiichi forgot all his scruples. His mind and body were trembling with excitement as he lay in bed. He felt that these geisha were finer creatures than Tsuruko, and that he would not be sorry even if he should fall into temptation with one of them.

CHAPTER XXVII

In Difficulties



THE end of the year was now at hand and all the transport agencies were very busy handling goods. Hozumi came back from Izu five days later and reported that the ship was quite sound and that, as half the cargo had been saved, they would probably not be able to get the insurance money. Even now, however, if they had the courage to damage the rest of the cargo with water, the Marine Insurance Company would probably pay the full insurance. Murai inquired of the Maruni Company by telephone what he should do and was told to let the goods be damaged by water and get the insurance.

Two or three days passed, and then the *Kobé News* published some particulars of a quarrel between Murai and his wife. It was something about Murai having struck his wife and of an exaggerated complaint having been made at the police station. It was also stated that Murai was on terms of intimacy with a low-class geisha. There had been stories going about the office for two or three weeks of Murai's intimacy with a girl of the kind, and there had been some amusement at a stingy fellow like Murai going after girls because his wife was with child. This was the origin of the trouble, and Eiichi felt some regret that it should have got into the papers. That day they were extremely busy in the office, but Murai did not show his face all day.

That evening, while Eiichi was reckoning up the day's takings, Roku came back from the harbour and reported that there was a rumour that Hosokawa of their office had got the daughter of the cakeman into trouble. This was the girl to whom Roku had given the kitten. The girl was only about fifteen or sixteen and there was thus a difference of ten years between

her age and Hosokawa's. In noting this, however, Eiichi remembered his own weaknesses and so said nothing about it to Hosokawa. When they all came back from the harbour that evening,—Hosokawa, Yamada and Hozumi,—they showed no difference in their bearing, but next morning Eiichi heard Hozumi and Hosokawa quarrelling in the kitchen, though what about he did not know. Afterwards Hozumi came to Eiichi and warned him against Hosokawa, but Eiichi did not learn what the warning referred to.

That evening Hosokawa did not return, nor the next day, nor the day after. Murai also did not come to the office for three days, so that Eiichi and Hozumi and Yamada, who was not yet twenty, and Rokuya, the boy, had to work till they were nearly exhausted. There was another trouble, and that was that while they had to advance the insurance premiums on the goods they had no money to do it with. Murai had the cheque-book of the bank, where there ought to have been a deposit of five or six hundred yen, and Eiichi was at his wit's end to know what to do. Murai must have received a hundred and seven yen from Kazama for transport charges, he thought. Also, till Maruni's affair was settled they could not collect their charges from them. Not knowing what else to do Eiichi made use of an amount of three hundred and thirty yen which had been sent by Kondo at Tokushima as freight charges.

On the 9th of December, while Eiichi was reading the newspaper upstairs, Rokuya came up and announced that Soda, the head of the firm of Kazama, had called. Eiichi went down to see him and then discovered Hosokawa's dishonesty. He learned that while Hozumi was away at Izu, Hosokawa had abstracted two hundred and fifty bushels of rice from a quantity of seven hundred and fifty bushels which was to be shipped from Kobé by the *Hakata-maru* to Otaru in the Hokkaido on the 1st of December. Eiichi was thunder-struck, but told Soda that he would inquire into the matter.

Murai came that morning looking quite unconcerned, and went into the office after Soda had gone. Eiichi said nothing to Murai about his absence, but informed him of Hosokawa's dishonesty as he had learnt of it from Soda. Murai made an indignant exclamation and rang up several places on the telephone, but all he could learn was that Hosokawa had gone

to Tokyo. Yamada, without knowing of Hosokawa's dishonesty, told Murai that two hundred and fifty bushels of rice had been bought by a broker named Tanii of Higashikawasaki-cho, whereupon Murai gave an ejaculation of despair and said that nothing could be done.

Eiichi asked Murai how much they had to their account in the bank, whereupon Murai curtly replied that there were only three hundred yen if he drew his salary for the month.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Loan



EARLY next morning Eiichi was reading upstairs in his study when the boy Rokuya came up and said that Mr. Shinoda, from the Pier, had come. By the Pier was meant the branch office of the Japan Mail Steamship Company, which was situated by the pier next to the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Yard.

"I wonder what his business is," said Eiichi, absent-mindedly. "Show him upstairs."

"Mr. Shinoda?" said Toku, the servant. "Is that him that's always coming to the office? He's fat and has a long moustache and wears gold-rimmed glasses, don't he?" and she took a cushion from in front of the screen on which were inscribed some Chinese characters written by Mr. Suichiku, an old friend of Eiichi's father.

Eiichi knew Shinoda at the Pier quite well, and Shinoda had also been at the office three or four times since Eiichi's arrival, although he had not come upstairs, but had only stopped a few minutes, talking loudly to Murai in a chaffing sort of way while puffing at his cigar, and then suddenly going away again, upon which Murai generally burst into laughter.

A moment after there was a loud noise on the stairs and a big man of about forty came up. He was dressed in morning clothes.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Niimi," said Shinoda. "Fine weather to-day, eh?"

He put his hard felt hat on the floor and wiped his moustache with his handkerchief, making an easy salutation before he sat down. Four or five sparrows were chirping on the roof of the warehouse behind.

Eiichi bowed with his hands on the mats in Japanese style. "Please sit down," he said.

Shinoda looked at the books on the shelf in the alcove.

"Are these what you read?" he asked in a loud voice. "Won't you let me just have a look?" and he went up to the bookshelf.

"Hm, all philosophical works, eh? No, here's Karl Marx's 'Capital.' You're not a philosopher only, eh? Ah, here's Westermarck's 'Origin of Human Marriage.' You only read things that people of my sort can't understand."

Shinoda spoke in a very familiar way. He was a lively fellow, with all the vitality of a school-boy, and for that reason he was generally liked by all at the Pier.

There was a moment's silence while Shinoda ran his eyes over the books.

"It's a pity you're only the head of a transport agency," he said. "There are not many bookshops in Kobé that have such a collection of philosophical works. Kobé's not a place where people read books. That's why they're all such fools, eh?" and he went off into a laugh. He certainly had a very loud voice.

Eiichi watched Shinoda in silence while he examined the books.

"Mr. Niimi," Shinoda went on, "you should give up the transport business and get an appointment as professor in an academy. Shall I help you to get a position as teacher of ethics in a Middle School?"

He was saying the first thing that came into his head.

"No, thank you," answered Eiichi. "I'd rather be excused from teaching ethics in a Middle School."

"No, no. The fact is that I have a friend who's opened a private Middle School of about two hundred boys and he's asked me to find him some masters who can talk English well and understand philosophy. He offers to engage them at about seventy yen a month. I'm looking for them now."

"Persons in Kobé who understand philosophy?" said Eiichi. "I expect he'd be satisfied with a man who wears a red neck-tie and knows enough English to say 'Good morning.'"

"Yes, but you know sometimes there are graduates from theological schools in America who are idling away their time in Kobé in some firm. That's what he's thinking of, no doubt. Persons of good character who have made a special study of

philosophy are well thought of in the provinces, you know."

"Yes, I suppose there are some graduates from theological seminaries."

The boy came upstairs bringing tea.

"Well, you've got some interesting books there," said Shinoda, "and you read a lot of poetry too, I see," and he sat himself down on a cushion with his legs crossed quite at his ease.

The servant now came up with the tobacco-box, which she placed in front of Shinoda.

"Do you smoke?" asked Shinoda, as he took a cigar out of his pocket.

"No," said Eiichi.

"That's good. And you don't drink either?"

"No, I don't drink now. I find it makes no difference to me whether I drink or not."

The servant here struck into the conversation.

"And he don't eat fish or meat."

"That's extraordinary," said Shinoda. "What's the reason of that?"

"I'm a vegetarian," said Eiichi, "and a rigid one too."

"What strange ideas you follow!"

"Well, when you come to think of it, it's a queer custom for human beings to eat meat. If you study the construction of the stomach and the teeth from a biological point of view you will find that man is an herbivorous animal. Even if that wasn't so, why shouldn't even mosquitoes and lice and fleas be free to enjoy their lives?" and Eiichi laughed.

"Is it queer to eat meat?" said Shinoda. "Persons like you, of weak constitution, will die if they don't eat meat."

"What, die if you don't eat meat? The Japanese farmers don't look much like dying."

A notebook on the desk caught Shinoda's eye.

"Well, it's no doubt quite true that people shouldn't eat meat," he said while he looked at it. "Buddha forbade the killing of living things. But nevertheless I shall go on eating meat," and he burst into a loud laugh. "What's this?" he added, referring to the notebook.

"Oh, that's nothing,—only a diary of my thoughts."

"And what's that pile of papers over there?"

"These?" said Eiichi, and he ran through his fingers a pile

of two or three hundred sheets of manuscript. "You mustn't laugh, but it's a study of the history of physiognomy."

"What an extraordinary subject," said Shinoda, and he burst into another laugh.

For a while they were silent and then Shinoda spoke again.

"Mr. Niimi," he said, "the fact is that I called to see you to-day on a little business, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

"Certainly," replied Eiichi, "especially as it's you," and he gave a slight laugh. He thought that Shinoda had probably called about money. The rumour that he had heard the other day in the Hanakuma quarter of Shinoda's gaities gave him the idea that he must be financially embarrassed.

"I came to you," Shinoda went on, "because I thought you'd do what I want and also because I thought you were best able to do it. The fact is I want to know if you will be so good as to lend me some money."

Shinoda did not display any diffidence in making his request.

"Certainly," said Eiichi. "How much do you want?"

"I want just a hundred yen."

Eiichi wondered whether he had a hundred yen that he could lend, but nevertheless he asked boldly, "Do you want it to-day?"

"Oh, no, not necessarily to-day. But I must have it by the end of the month."

"By the end of the month, eh? Yes, I think I can do it. I shall be able to oblige you about the twenty-fifth of the month. If you only want a hundred yen I can do it."

"Thank you. Please do your best for me. My wife in the country is sick or something and she's sent to ask me for some money."

"Oh, that'll be all right. I'll certainly put the matter through for you."

"Well, I haven't any other business," said Shinoda, "so I'll go now. Sorry to trouble you so early."

Shinoda affected to be quite at his ease, but he had flushed slightly and his eyes had a furtive look behind his glasses.

"Well, good morning then," said Eiichi, making no effort to detain him.

Shinoda took his hat and went downstairs. Eiichi did not get up to see him off, but merely murmured an excuse as he sat at his desk.

The servant went down to the office with Shinoda and then came up again. Rokuya, the boy, also came up to take away the tobacco-box, and seeing Eiichi, began to talk.

"Master," he said, "that chap Shinoda, didn't he come to-day to borrow money? Don't he look proud and 'aughty down at the Pier and wasn't he meek and humble to-day? He's the most conceited of the lot down at the Pier."

"Well," said Eiichi, "isn't he the head there?"

"They say he's passed through the Tokyo Higher Commercial School," Rokuya went on. "Are the fellows from that school always so proud?"

Then happening to glance out of the window, another idea came into Rokuya's head.

"Ain't it fine to-day," he went on. "I should like to go out into the country," and he went bounding to the window. Rokuya was fourteen years old and a mischievous imp.

"Don't jump about like that, Roku," said Eiichi. "You'll make a dust."

Rokuya took no notice, but only went out onto the drying-stage.

"You can see Anchor Hill," he called out. "I should like to go out on the hills and enjoy myself."

"What does Mr. Shinoda do all day at the Pier?" asked Toku.

"He's the second in charge at the branch office there," said Rokuya, "so he sits in a chair all day and puts on airs," and Rokuya demonstrated what Shinoda looked like when he put on airs.

"Don't he do nothing else?" asked Toku.

"He's sent his missus away into the country and now he has to go to Fukuhara to enjoy himself. Master, did you hear?" and Rokuya sat down on the window-sill and began swinging his legs backwards and forwards.

"Just hark to him talking," laughed the servant.

"I tell you that fellow makes himself felt in the office. All the other boys are afraid of him, but I go up to his desk and play all sorts of tricks."

"Hark at him," said the servant, who was laughing all the time.

"He taught me a lot of English the other day, he did—*dogu*, that's English for dog, and *suchiima*, that's English for steamer, and *ranchi*, that's launch. Then *waebu* is wave, and . . . I've been and forgotten the others. . . . No, I remember,—*chimoni*, that's funnel."

"You remember quite a lot," said Eiichi.

"I say, master, won't you teach me a little English?"

"Isn't what you know enough?"

"Just that little? I want to know enough to be able to read all the books here quite easily. Then I shouldn't be just the boy in Niimi's Transport Agency. If I could talk English like the master I'd go round to the Pier and amaze 'em all by swaggering round and talking nothing but English—*kuran chun kichi ba*. Then I'd get hold of foreigners and speak to them in English. That would be fun."

Toku was holding her sides with laughter.

"What's the use of just showing off?" asked Eiichi.

"Oh, I'd make a swagger and get lots of money."

"You're very avaricious. People who make a great show generally have no money."

"Well, I'd just make a show then, so won't you teach me English?"

"Shall I send you to a night-school?"

"A night-school—an English one? Yes, I'd go if you sent me."

"What's the time, Roku?"

"It's about nine, I think."

"Just go downstairs and see if Mr. Murai has come."

"Mr. Sankichi ain't come to-day. I say, master, you saw that in the paper the other day?"

"Yes, I saw it."

A voice from below called "Roku." It was Murai's voice without doubt.

"Ah, Sankichi's come," said Rokuya. "He's calling in that loud voice of his. I won't take any notice. Talk of the devil . . . It's true, ain't it, Toku? . . . He's being drained by some girl up in Yamanoté all right . . . Master, you should just see his house in Kitanagasa—it is a dirty place."

"Yes? Have you been there?"

"Lots of times."

Then the voice called again from below—"Roku."

"I ain't going," said Roku. "I say, master, Murai's missus, she's an awful creature. She's as mean as mean can be."

"What funny faces you make," said Toku. "But, I say, Roku, if you don't go downstairs Mr. Murai will get angry again. Go downstairs, do now."

"Sankichi don't frighten me when he gets angry," said Roku, and he stuck his head forward and bared his teeth and showed his contempt by a wave of his arm.

"I say, master," he went on, "have you seen his kids? Every one of 'em's as ugly as sin, and they're such hungry, mischievous little devils . . . Oh, there's Sankichi coming upstairs," and at the sound of steps on the stairs Rokuya darted out onto the drying-stage and hid himself on the roof.

As Rokuya suspected, the steps were those of Murai. He stuck his body half in at the door and, without saluting Eiichi, said, "Where's that rascal Roku hiding again? I heard his voice upstairs."

Then Murai went downstairs again muttering.

Eiichi and the servant felt sorry for Murai and did not look at him, but after he had gone downstairs they looked at each other and laughed. Roku coming in from the roof also laughed.

Then Eiichi, taking Roku with him, went out into the harbour to look after the handling of cargo, a work which gave even Eiichi pleasure.

CHAPTER XXIX

The New Year



EIICHI became convinced that a business life would not suit him; he felt that he was not one who could fit himself into the present social system. Nevertheless he had not the courage to abandon his business at once. He could not enter the dockers' lodging-house as he had in the summer, and even though he would have liked to be a journalist his courage failed him when he thought that he would have to mix with such men as he met at the time of the election to the Municipal Assembly. He felt disgusted with himself.

He took no interest in anything. He did not like the constraint of his work, and since the time that he had assisted in the Municipal election his heart had been disturbed by thoughts of Kiyonosuké and Kohidé,—thoughts which he could not drive out. With the disorder into which he himself had fallen he saw all things around him falling into disorder. The Niimi Transport Agency, he felt, could not continue its career much longer. Woman was the only thing that could bring comfort to his lonely heart. Yet a strong desire seized him to become pure and devote his life resolutely to social service. He had not been to the Tama-no-ya since he had taken the geishas Kiyonosuké and Kohidé to the theatre.

He felt keenly that religion was the only thing that could save him at this critical moment of his life. As the end of the year approached his religious fervour was more and more aroused and he went every evening to the Gospel Mission Hall in Fukuharaguchi. He still felt some repugnance, but in his craving for religion he could not afford to be particular regarding outside formalities and creeds, and he listened in silence to the sermons and the testimonies. He had come to grasp more or less the essentials of the religion.

The settlement of accounts at the end of the year showed the instability of his business. A hundred yen had been lent to Shinoda out of nothing, and the money advanced for the insurance of Maruni's goods had not been returned. Eiichi had been forced also to give a promissory note for nearly a thousand yen, the money that Hosokawa had embezzled. Altogether the coming year was looked forward to with some anxiety.

Eiichi's desire was to free himself as quickly as possible and throw himself into the Labour movement, but he felt that he could not abandon an office which, though small, yet enjoyed some amount of credit.

The last day of the year 1908 came, and Eiichi attended the Watch Night service as he wanted to close the year in prayer. Fukuharaguchi seemed especially lively that evening, and although he did not feel much in the mood for prayer, he prayed that next year he might at least make some progress in the direction of assisting in the Labour movement.

Although the end of the year brought them trouble, New Year's Day was cheerful. Enlivened by the sweet saké, Murai, Hozumi, Rokuya and the servant Toku all seemed happy. Eiichi also made an effort to appear cheerful, but found it impossible. Somehow he felt that he ought to submit to the inspiration of his religious inclinations and to the Heavenly Father, but at the same time his philosophical questionings, which had become the habit of years, deprived him of the courage to throw himself whole-heartedly into religion. Now at the New Year especially, when he heard people talk of putting on their best clothes and going to the Hanakuma or the Fukuhara quarter to enjoy themselves, while he was left out in the cold, he felt how pitiful was his lot.

He made a lonely tour of the Kyoto and Nara district. He arrived at misty Kyoto on the morning of the 2nd of January after a shake-up in the train and took a jinrikisha to the museum. Then he went from the Ginkakuji to Omuro, but he found nothing interesting. The next day he went to Nara, but it was all the same, and he repeated the words of the Emperor in the first scene of the second part of Faust:

Ich habe satt das ewige Wie und Wenn.
Es fehlt an Geld,—nun gut, da schaff es denn.

On the fifth day after he left home, when the train was proceeding west of the small station of Horiuji, he had an indescribable feeling of melancholy as he saw the dark Buddhist temple in the grove to the northeast disappearing in the mist. Tired with his journey and also tired of life, he felt like crying. It would be better for him, he thought, if he made up his mind to lie down on the rails and let himself be run over by the next train, and thus pass into nothingness. It was only the thought that all things might not pass away that kept him dragging out his aimless life. Ah, why had he ever been born? He was a machine that would not work however much oil was applied. Even the consolation of Kohidé would be of no avail.

It was five days since he had left home. His heart was oppressed with the thought that there was no one to save him. God? No, God's hands were too short to reach him even though he prayed. Women? No, they were still less powerless than God. Money? Money! Despicable! No, it was useless.

He leaned his hot and aching head against the window, closed his eyes and dozed. The train was making a terrible noise as it sped along. He thought how nice it would be if the whole carriage were made of glass.

From Tennoji the train stopped at a tiresome number of stations. Looking out of the window he saw distasteful names like Tenman Station or Tamazukuri Station, quite in the Osaka style, written on the square station lamps. Between the stations there were deserts of tiled roofs with black smoke rising above them. Osaka by night looked an eerie place, something like a storm-tossed ocean. When the train was going along the banks of the Yodogawa he suddenly remembered that it was a famous place for suicides and also that he had once seen at the Aioiza Theatre in Kobé the drama of the suicide of Hanshichi Akaneya and Sankatsu, his sweetheart. Suicide and Osaka by night. He could not understand why, but they seemed to him to have a horribly close association.

What a terrible place Osaka was! Crowded places were terrible.

The office had been fairly successful during his absence. On the 2nd of January, when they began work for the New Year, they had received notice from Oguri, a rice-broker in Shima-

kami-machi, that he would be sending five thousand bales of rice to Otaru. They had not handled such a large quantity of goods lately.

"We're going to have luck this year, you see," said Murai, with a loud burst of laughter from his wide mouth.

On the other hand a customer who had supported them for over twenty years, when on the point of concluding another contract for the handling of indigo, finally decided not to let the goods pass through the hands of Niimi, but to send them direct to the steamer. Rokuya, the boy, was very much disgusted and expressed his resentment openly in front of Eiichi.

"I don't want to stay in this measly old office any more," he said. "I'll go back home and be a farmer."

Murai thought that their policy that year should be to get hand in glove with the wholesale rice dealers, but that month the wholesale rice dealers were not very busy, and Oguri, after sending the five thousand bales to Otaru, only sent another thousand bales for Muroran. There was much talk of the banks in Tokyo practising caution.

Soda's account had not been paid, and the accounts for January had been left unpaid until the 5th of February. Soda sent no more rice for transportation, and day after day, with only two or three hundred bales of rice to handle, the five of them sat at their desks with nothing to do but read the papers. As there was no work to do Rokuya got lazy and did not put away the papers, which were scattered all over the office. The confusion that reigned inside was not all, for just then some thirty or forty fellows, who were migrating from the interior of Awa Province to the Hokkaido, were parading the streets, making the vicinity very lively. In the midst of this confusion Eiichi failed to discover any reason for man's existence.

CHAPTER XXX

Conversion



THERE was only one way left for Eiichi and that was death,—cold, quiet death. He thought that he would like to do something violent to see whether he could die or not. The ordinary ways of death,—such as drowning, hanging, being run over or blown up, capital punishment and death from disease or poison,—he did not find interesting. But to run like one in a Marathon race,—to run and run till one was exhausted and one's heart broke,—that he thought was the best way of dying. Would he be able to accomplish his self-destruction in that way he wondered. At one time,—fortunately when no one was looking,—he threw himself down on the road, crying to his body, "Die!" but with no effect. Nevertheless there was always the danger that in his present mood he would commit suicide. When he looked at a knife, or at the sea, or when he passed a chemist's shop, he always thought of death. He thought that he would ill-treat his body as much as possible. Was there no means of compassing death? He took rambles along the shore from Suma to Akashi, but the more he gazed on death the more the marvellousness of existence impressed his tired eyes. Especially when he looked at the face of a child borne on the back of a woman life seemed to him more wonderful than nature itself. But he did not possess any sense that would allow him to probe still further into the wonders of life and sound its depths. Thus he wandered between life and death. Like one bewitched by an evil spirit he spent every day in his room weeping. He felt as if his body were swollen with water; his hands and feet seemed to him to be growing enormously large and his brain and chest smaller, and he thought that he would end by being a leper with a scaly skin. His breathing became painful and his tongue dried up.

He wished that he could be lost in a dream even for a moment, to stop breathing even for an instant; that he could weep his heart out. His fits of sobbing verged on hysteria. He thought of himself as ashes and of the world as a crematorium, in the furnace of which flesh and blood were burned. Outside the furnace everything was ice-bound, and a northerly blast blew from the depths of hell, strong enough to rend the throat. His body was only half inside the furnace and the other half was frost-bitten. Could he yet revolt against the power of death?—break the furnace into pieces with his frost-bitten hands?—grasp the burning embers and throw them on the ice on which he stood?

Ice melts, and then he would lose his foothold. Whither would he fall? Where? Where? Then the eternal dream would begin.

What were the State, civilisation, father, lover, existence, God, virtue, beauty?—Were they not all nought? To fall, to fall, all things together with death, in the ruin of the world, identity extinguished,—would it not mean extinction? Ambition, misunderstanding, superstition, falsehood,—all the conventions that formed the crust of the social system,—would they not be scattered to the winds when his identity vanished? Life was like playing with a flower that bloomed out of nothingness. The nothingness of nothing—a kind of minus of minus!

Must he still go on living? No, no, let existence, that blind guide, drag him to the edge of the universe quickly:—there he would jump down, flying willingly from the world of death to a still remoter world.

Thus he thought, his mind filled with agony. Nothing could comfort him,—women, books, or the sun. He was disgusted with himself for his impotence, his want of spirit, his lack of ideality.

His agony lasted for a month and a half, but the wonder of life had too strong a hold of him and finally it gained the victory. He decided to accept all,—yes, all. Life and all its manifestations, that are borne onward upon the stream of time, he would accept. He was resurrected from the abyss of despair and returned to the wonderful world. He resolved that he would live steadfastly in the actual world, endued with the strength of death. All things were wonderful,—death, he him-

self, the earth, stones, sand, food, women, girls, steamships—even the void that he sought was itself wonderful. Colour, sunlight, design, roses, the cherry lips of girls,—all were wonderful;—even clotted blood and sin and the defiled heart,—all were wonderful. He accepted them all. He resolved that he would live steadfastly,—that he would take heart and henceforward struggle on bravely, and for that purpose he would accept all the facts of existence. Religion, together with all its symbols, he would also accept. He resolved that he would enter into the conflict with the courage of a suicide.

Thus resolved he was gradually drawn to Christ. He told himself that it was not into the sea that he would throw himself, but into the wonders of the world.

So it came to pass that on the 14th of February he decided to profess himself a disciple of Christ.

His church was one of the smallest in Kobé, at Mizukidori, Hyogo,—the Japan Christian Meeting-house, which was in the charge of an American missionary named Dr. Williams. Dr. Williams had been for some time at Tokushima, and Eiichi, in his Middle School days, had gone to him to read the Bible in English and to learn English conversation. The Gospel Mission Hall Eiichi had found too noisy, and while he was looking for a place to suit his disposition he discovered Dr. Williams' meeting-house and went there. It was on the second Sunday after he had discovered this small meeting-house that he was baptised.

Nevertheless Eiichi liked the simple faith of the Gospel Mission Hall, especially the sincere manner of the Pastor, Mr. T., and the hearty way in which he received people. He also liked the poor believers who went there. He therefore went every Sunday with the others attached to the Gospel Mission Hall,—headed by the Pastor, Mr. T., and a missionary, Mr. W., and including those who were studying the Bible in order to undertake evangelistic work,—to the park at Minatogawa to preach in the open air.

After Eiichi became a follower of Jesus he tried hard to be second to none in his faith, but at first he felt rather shy in practising open-air preaching. He was afraid that some one would recognise him and reveal his own defects.

It was a Saturday evening in March that he first went alone

to the slums of Shinkawa at Fukiai, on the edge of Kobé, and started preaching in the street. When he was living at the dockers' lodging-house the summer before he often passed that way and had thought that among all the slums in Japan there could be none so terribly dirty as those. There were six streets, all horribly dirty, where over eight thousand people lived in eighty long buildings, which were divided up into rooms nine feet square, in some of which as many as nine people lived and slept. Eiichi thought that he must certainly go and live there, but as he knew no one there, for the sake of making acquaintances he decided to start open-air preaching. He sang a hymn alone and then started preaching, while the workers in their rags gathered round him with curious faces. The electric lights in the street shone brilliantly.

"Cast aside the defilements of earth and look up to Heaven," cried Eiichi, and he himself looked up and saw the clear spring sky, in which countless stars were shining,—truly a beautiful sight. Below the stars were the long lines of the electric lights, looking particularly brilliant that evening. Eiichi thought of the voice crying in the wilderness, and felt that he himself was a kind of prophet.

He knew that he must bear himself bravely. He had rebelled against his school, his father, his family, and society, and henceforward he must struggle along manfully alone. Thus he thought as with tears in his eyes he preached the Gospel of Jesus.

Eiichi preached for thirty or forty minutes the gospel of love as given in the Sermon on the Mount, while the audience around him asked, "What's he talking about?" "Who is he?" to which some one replied, "He's one of the Amen fellows." Eiichi had come with the expectation of rough treatment and the abusive remarks of his audience did not trouble him.

Then a ferocious looking man of about thirty, with a pock-marked face and a deformed body, and a look that clearly showed that he was an old offender against the law, drew near to Eiichi.

"Won't you let me give my testimony?" he asked.

Eiichi thought that he was a strange-looking fellow, but observed that he had a penny Bible in his hand. Wondering what would be the outcome, Eiichi asked the man to wait a minute,

and then broke off his sermon and introduced the man to the audience as "a gentleman who desired to bear witness." The man's testimony was as follows:

"I come out of prison only the other day. My name's Torataro Ueki. Everybody here in Shinkawa knows I'm a bad one. I went to prison when I was fifteen because I set fire to a house in the street and burned down the whole neighbourhood,—they're all rebuilt now. I got nine years for that and only come out the other day. I can't read the Bible much, but I learnt my letters in prison and then some one give me a Bible. There's good reading in this book for all, and as it only costs five sen all of you ought to get it and read it. I ain't exactly cured of all my wickedness yet, but you should go and see Asashiro Murakami at Yamanoté. He was the cleverest pickpocket in the west country, but now he's converted."

The man did not know exactly how to finish his speech and retired somewhat confused.

After the preaching was over and Eiichi was preparing to go, Torataro Ueki stopped him.

"Just wait a bit," he said. "I've got something to ask you. Just come with me for a moment."

Eiichi was a little bit taken aback by the familiar manner of the man and his assertive way of speaking, but his experiences at the dockers' lodging-house had enabled him to get a little insight into the mental condition of the working classes, and he followed Ueki.

Ueki led him into the depths of a very dark alley and stopped before a tenement house.

"Are you a Christian pastor?" he asked familiarly.

"No, I'm not a pastor or anything like that."

"Can you preach when you're not a pastor?"

"Of course I can."

"Do you know Asashiro Murakami, the pastor?"

"No, I don't know him."

"That's funny. You must be a greenhorn at Christianity. Everybody in Kobé knows Asashiro Murakami of Okuhirano. He helps every one what comes out of prison. Look here, I want to go about preaching Christianity like you. Where do I have to go? Where's the head office of the Christians in Kobé?"

He spoke as though he knew all about it though he knew nothing.

"There's no special headquarters for Christians," said Eiichi.

"Well, where's your church?"

"It's the meeting-house in Mizukidori in Hyogo."

"Is there a church there? I never knew of it. What's the name of the pastor?"

"He's an American named Williams."

"A foreigner, is he? Well, foreigners are kind. You won't get angry at my asking you, will you, but what do they pay you every month for going about preaching?"

"I don't get any pay for it,—I do it for love."

"That ain't possible. They must give you something. I heard they give 'em at least twenty-five yen a month. You ain't telling the truth. You know that book 'Twenty-three Years behind the Iron Bars.' The man that wrote it, as soon as he got out of prison he became a preacher. I want to be a preacher like him, but I ain't got any one to help me. That's why I asked if you knew where the head office is. When I come out of prison the people in this house"—and he pointed his finger to the place—"they took me in, but I spend my time dawdling about every day. The people in that house, you know, they've looked after me ever since I was a boy, and they don't make any trouble about feeding me as long as I like, but it's awkward idling away your time and not having any money. Don't you know of any easy work that I can earn a little money at? I'm a bit deformed, you know,"—and he showed that his right arm was a little shorter than his left. "I've got lots about this and other things I want to tell you and things I want to ask you. Where's your house?"

Eiichi was surprised at the man's rough way of speaking and thought that it would never do for him to visit the office in Kajiya-machi. However, he told him that it was in Kajiya-machi, in Hyogo. "If you ask for the Niimi Transport Agency you'll soon find it," he added.

"Niimi Transport Agency? Kajiya-machi? Are you going home now? You must be a very strong believer to come out in this cold weather to preach. I've got a lot of things to ask you and I want to talk to you about my own circumstances too."

As he had a long way to go Eiichi made an excuse and was

going out of the alley when Ueki said he would see him off and followed him. To cut the story short, the man, having no work, and finding that he could not become an evangelist, wanted to borrow some money so that he could set himself up as a cake-seller.

Unfortunately Eiichi had very little money on him and thus was unable to give Ueki the assistance he required at once. Moreover he did not know what kind of man Ueki was. In these circumstances they were about to part when the man, with an excuse, made a petition for the loan of a few sen.

Eiichi took all the money he had on him out of his purse and gave it to the man,—it was only eighty-one sen, and the man, without a word of thanks, said a hasty good-bye and went off.

Eiichi was surprised at the manner of the man and understood well what the atmosphere in the slums must be like if men like him lived there.

The next day was Sunday and Eiichi went to the meeting-house in Mizukidori. When he got home he found Ueki waiting for him, and all the people in the office, from Murai downwards, with a curious look on their faces. Ueki asked Eiichi to come outside and there begged for a loan of twenty yen so that he could set himself up as a cake-seller. Eiichi thought that the man had no right to make such a demand, but as he had a desire to put into practice the teachings of Jesus he promised to lend the man the money. But when Eiichi went back into the office and asked Murai to advance him twenty yen, Murai objected.

"What are you going to do with it, Mr. Eiichi?" he asked. "You're surely not going to lend it to that man, are you? How could any one be so foolish as to lend twenty yen to a man like that? Five yen's enough—quite enough," and he took five yen out of the safe and gave it to him.

Eiichi took the five yen and sent Ueki away with it with an excuse.

After that Ueki called at Eiichi's office every day, but was unable to see Eiichi, who happened to be out in the harbour attending to cargo.

On Thursday evening, when Eiichi went to the meeting-house, Dr. Williams asked him if he knew a man named Ueki.

"Yes, I know him," said Eiichi. "Why?"

"Well, he said that you told him to ask me for fifteen yen, so I gave him five yen."

"What an insolent fellow he is!" thought Eiichi, and he told Dr. Williams the whole story from the beginning,—how he had been preaching in the street in the slums and how the man had appeared.

Dr. Williams was delighted when he heard the story, and proposed that he should go with Eiichi to preach in the slums. But Eiichi declined the offer. He felt that to go with a foreigner might cause a misapprehension, but he expressed the hope that Dr. Williams would give him his moral support.

From that time Eiichi left all the affairs of the office in the hands of Murai. He had determined to devote himself entirely to religious work.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Capitalist



EIICHI continued to show great religious earnestness, but his religious ardour did not help to resuscitate the business of his office. Murai and Hozumi were quite indifferent to religion and said nothing to him about his open-air preaching at Minatogawa.

"Mr. Eiichi has become a very earnest Christian lately," was the only remark made. Hozumi said nothing at all. They had not been going to the brothels lately, however; the Hosokawa affair had apparently taught them a lesson.

As business had become so quiet Eiichi thought he would devote his time to writing a study of the life of Jesus, and every morning he read the works of Sandae, Hills, Schweitzer and others. Then every Sunday he assisted in the Sunday School or preached by himself in the open air. He went to the Fukiai slums two or three times after his first visit with some of the pupils of the Mission Hall, but as it was rather far and he thought it was useless to divide his energies, he did not go again.

The cherry-blossoms at Suma flowered and faded and it became the season for the dispatch of Banshu vermicelli to all parts of the country. Eiichi's office became a little busy, therefore.

"There's three hundred boxes of vermicelli from Soda, eh? That chap don't want to send it through us, but he'd like to get back the thousand yen that Hosokawa took and that's why he comes to us. If he got his money back I bet he'd send it by the Takagi Transport Agency. I wonder if anything has come from Awa to-day. It would be nice to get some goods from Awa. I'm getting tired of doing nothing."

It was the mischievous Rokuya speaking, but such complaints now grew fewer.

It was April when Murai made a proposal to Eiichi.

"How would it do to mortgage the telephone to Miyoshi of the Railway Transport Agency in Kitanagasa-dori, and use the money to pay off Soda?"

Eiichi raised no objection, of course. Murai told him that Miyoshi wanted to buy out the Niimi Agency.

Summer came and found Eiichi living a very humdrum life. Women and love had been forgotten. This quiet life had enabled him to write a hundred and fifty or sixty pages of his study of the life of Jesus. He went to the harbour as usual to transact his business and made many friends among the boatmen.

When Eiichi went among the boatmen and heard them shouting their jokes at one another he felt very happy. At noon in summer, when the unloading and loading of cargo was finished, they all stripped themselves and plunged into the sea, their beautiful brown, lithe bodies floating on the waves. The white foam rippled over the blue sea, while overhead the sun shone brilliantly. The whole harbour sparkled and the air was filled with indescribable murmurs of the joy of life, coming from he knew not where.

"Come in, Mister Niimi," yelled one of the boatmen, and two or three others took up the cry. Eiichi, attired only in his loin cloth, plunged into the water from the deck of the steamer.

No sooner had he struck the water with a splash than he seemed to be going down to the bottom of the sea, with the foam flying round him. Then at the moment when he began to be anxious as to how far he would go down, he found himself floating again on the surface of the sea. Striking out among the blue waves while recovering his breath, he looked around him and found the sea also a thing of beauty. The sea and everything was sublime; it was impossible not to glory in the summer sun and the sea.

When he got back to the dark office in Kajiya-machi everything seemed to him to look very mean and dirty. That day particularly Murai's remarks appeared very trivial. That was because Murai could talk of nothing but the difficulties into which the Niimi Transport Agency had fallen.

At the end of July a letter came from his sister Emi, whose whereabouts had been so long unknown. She wrote:—

"Excuse me for not having written to you for so long. After I parted from my brother I had nothing but misfortunes. I changed my place thirteen times and at last got into the house of a person named Takeda, who I afterwards found was an old school friend. There the master of the house helped me and I got married to the manager of a branch office in Formosa, at the address written on the envelope. The climate in Formosa does not suit me, however, and it is my intention to return to Japan as quickly as possible. I want to get back quickly because I am with child and moreover have symptoms of beri-beri. I thought about brother so much that about a month ago I wrote to stepmother to inquire, and got news that father was dead and brother in the Hyogo office. I cry every day. It seems very unfilial that I was not able to be with father when he died, but I resigned myself with the thought that it was my fate. Please take care of yourself, brother. I have no one to look after me but you, so please, if you care for me at all, take care of yourself."

July passed. Hozumi's wages had not been paid for three months and Rokuya's for four months. This was because Hozumi and Rokuya deliberately refused to take the money while business was so bad. Hozumi had been in the office since he was a little chap and thought of it as his home. He therefore wished to do what he could for the office. Eiichi felt very grateful to him.

"As we don't get any wages," they said, "we'll take it out in food," and they certainly did eat. The way they ate was a source of amusement and made everybody in the office hold their sides with laughter.

What was wrong with the business was that they could not get enough goods to handle. While Eiichi's father was alive ninety per cent. of the products of Tokushima Prefecture used to pass through the hands of Niimi for transmission all over the country, but since his father's death much money had been expended uselessly and the salaries and miscellaneous expenses were bringing the business to ruin.

Eiichi wanted to hand over the business to some one else and himself enter a reputable office as clerk. The negotiations between Murai and Miyoshi were therefore continued. Finally Eiichi was engaged by the Kobé Marine Insurance Company,

with which the Maruni affair had made him acquainted, and after the Bon festival he began to attend the office of the company in Moto-machi. The progress of affairs had been like that of a storm. Eiichi was filled with misgivings every day of the approach of a low pressure area.

It was September 2nd. Eiichi was going hastily along Hon-machi towards Minatogawa to attend the office of the insurance company. Eiichi's way of walking when he was going quickly was the talk of the office. He went along with his head thrust forward, swaying his body from side to side.

A man walking in the middle of the road was coming in the opposite direction,—a stout, tall, dark man, dressed in Japanese clothes and with his hair cropped short. Eiichi recognised him as Miyoshi and then remembered that the interest on his loan had not been paid. Eiichi was dressed in foreign clothes, but his boots had not been cleaned, his trousers not creased, and his collar was dirty.

Eiichi thought at first that he would pass without even stopping to bow, but then he summoned up the courage to do so. They met just in front of Komaya's, which had long been famous as the best cake-shop in Hyogo.

Miyoshi bowed his close-cropped head and stopped.

"Ah, Mr. Niimi," Miyoshi said in a friendly way, "where are you going?"

At this unexpected greeting Eiichi became rather confused. He bowed and explained briefly that he was going to the office.

"I was just going to call at your place," said Miyoshi. "Is Mr. Murai in, do you know?"

"Yes, he is in."

"Well, then, I'll go along," said Miyoshi and off he went.

Eiichi felt as glad as if he had escaped from the claws of a dragon. Miyoshi, he thought, seemed as though about to say something else, and then, whether out of pity for Eiichi or because the place was too public, he desisted.

"What strange creatures we are!" thought Eiichi, as he passed Minatogawa and hastened along Aioi-machi. "Miyoshi's kinder than I thought. You can't get to the bottom of a man's heart when you've only met him once or twice. I didn't think he'd greet me this morning," and Eiichi, as he went along with his head bent, gazing at the stones in the road, reconstructed the

scene of the meeting in front of Komaya's. While he was crossing Aioi Bridge he thought that while people suffered from having to pay interest to the capitalists, the capitalists' claims were perfectly reasonable from their own point of view. It was a mistake to condemn the capitalists. If there were people who wished to live on capital and interest, let them do so. If there were other people who were envious of the lazy capitalists, let them first abstain from working. If people could not take pleasure in the enjoyments of others they were worthless. Could not beggars, however poor themselves, find some satisfaction in the wealth of others? If one did not regard matters with absolute disinterestedness one could not be said to have obtained enlightenment. Emerson, in his historical essays, had adopted much the same attitude. But that was no reason for discarding Socialism. His Socialism was of a broader character.

Miyoshi, by sucking his blood, would grow fat, and when Miyoshi grew fat he grew fat himself. If he and Miyoshi came to the same degree of fatness, then "fat people" would no longer exist in the world. But didn't it follow that this sameness would be uninteresting? Even if everybody became thin, if there was one man left as fat as a wrestler that would be satisfactory. He meant that one should desire some degree of greatness rather than vapidty. That was true. If Socialism was not founded on that basis then there was no hope of realising pure Socialism. Was not the fundamental principle of Socialism pleasure in others' progress? Was it Socialism to enhance one's position at the expense of the position of others? Why was it important to keep one's own position on the same level as that of others? Wasn't it from the reasoning that if one raised one's position to that of others they would be happy? To lower others by raising one's own position, was that Socialism? If Society was an organism—a very arbitrary conclusion—equality must prevail throughout the difference. The conclusion was that if he were run over and killed by a train or an electric tram it would show that Christianity could make sacrifices to civilisation. He smiled at the thought. A train was actually coming from the east—from Tokyo, suggesting thoughts of life. He was very fond of trains.

But he was no good. He had to sit at a desk and enter figures

as his daily life. It was a competition in patience with his nib.

Ah, if only the Christian orphanages were a little larger and could take in men like him! But that was a desire to be kept to himself; in the face of the world he must show an iron independence. It was the secret of a philosopher. That was why there were many hypocrites among philosophers. What had he gained from Harnack's history of faith? What had Theodore Hall's study of the English religious movement taught him? There was need for an orphanage for adults. It was impossible to seize the reality of Love unless religion was made material. When economic conditions were bad religious fervour increased. The history of all countries proved that, especially among the present-day English. He would build an adult orphanage. The greatest demand of the present age was not for children's orphanages—not for George Müllers and Juji Ishiis. Was it not for an artistic, Greco-Jewish Socialism or Anarchism? An orphanage for great men! In that orphanage the great men and women of the world, those who were conscious of their greatness, might find asylum. . . . Because he carried this secret at the bottom of his heart. . . . Because he had no father. . . . Christ himself was an orphan. He had to call on his Father.

He had crossed Aioi Bridge and was passing a butcher's and a very fine barber's shop. From the opposite direction a tall, elegant Japanese gentleman was coming with boots that shone like lacquer. Eiichi thought that he should like to be able to put on such style, but he had no money. He wished that he had money. At that moment he came to the corner of the stone building of the insurance company. A fine foreign lady was coming down a side street. What a beautiful face she had! Why were foreigners so good-looking he wondered as he pushed open the door and went upstairs to his desk.

Undoing his parcel, containing the second volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, he laid it by the side of his desk, and after greeting his fellow clerk, Shigeda, he took out the calculation which he had left unfinished the previous afternoon and began to enter up the figures.

Why was it that people bowed by bending their heads and inclining their bodies forwards? At the theatre, when the heroine was crying, she bent her elbows and covered her face with her hands. Why was that, when bending backwards would

look much more charming than bending forwards? How could it be explained by the principles of dynamics? Such was the strange problem he raised.

While he was revolving these things in his mind he went on entering up the figures quite peacefully, with a contented feeling.

It must be by the principle of acceleration. From of old the technical terms of dynamics had been applied to the head in traditional etiquette in speaking of it as high or low. A perpendicular line stood for the excitation of the spiritual influences; a horizontal line for the carnal impulses. These were the general principles of etiquette. They went on all fours in imitation of animals—that was the aim of etiquette. No, no, that was extreme. Yet he would like to know the explanation of custom and heredity, constitutionally and physically. He dipped his pen in the inkpot thinking of all sorts of things suggested by Ruskin's work.

He went over to the spittoon near the window—he suffered from a catarrh—and looked out of the window for a moment. There was a finely-dressed lady with a girl-student passing. As the weather was like summer she was wearing a white lace scarf as she chattered to the girl. "If she would just look up at me," thought Eiichi, but she passed by. In Tanaka's foreign goods shop opposite there were three or four foreigners. A Chinese in a jinrikisha passed quickly. After that came a bicycle and then two shopboys chattering. Then a cart.

"Society is plural," was the conclusion of Eiichi as he returned to his seat. He smiled as he thought that Ruskin would deny the beauty of the city. He entered 1,785 among the figures. How strange figures are, he thought, as he looked at them.

About four o'clock in the afternoon he went home, reading Ruskin's *Modern Painters* on the way. The world was no longer hateful to him. The movements of mankind were harmonious he thought, as a jinrikisha rushed past him.

When he got home he was told that Murai and Miyoshi were waiting for him. As he anticipated, Miyoshi told him that the negotiations for amalgamation had been completed and he hoped Eiichi would approve of them.

Eiichi showed no discontent. It was the same to him either way. If the matter was settled, then so much the better.

He congratulated Miyoshi in the tone of one who was only a third party in the matter.

"Have you been here ever since this morning, Mr. Miyoshi?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Murai kindly provided a feast for me," and Miyoshi laughed, creasing the wrinkles round his eyes and plumping out his fat cheeks.

"Really? I didn't know we had anything special in the house," said Eiichi.

"I ordered something from the Aozen restaurant," said Murai earnestly, sticking out his chin.

"The young master will assent to the arrangement, I know," continued Murai.

Eiichi, whose agreement was thus requested, knew nothing of what had been arranged, but he thought it was not the time to ask questions, so he only said that he would certainly agree.

"Well, we must celebrate the occasion by having a fowl or something," suggested Murai.

Miyoshi assented, and Murai, calling Rokuya, gave him two one-yen notes from his purse and told him to go out and buy a fowl. Eiichi saw that Murai had a lot of money in his purse; he was richer than Eiichi.

The fowl came and some wine, and when they had got rather flushed with the wine, Murai and Miyoshi began to praise Eiichi's father, saying what a good speaker he was, and how clever he was, and how quickly women fell in love with him, and how capable men were always attractive to women. Finally the talk drifted to Kohidé of the Tama-no-ya, and how Eiichi was very like his father in his cleverness and in the way girls fell in love with him. If he had a capital of twenty thousand yen and went into the foreign trade, say with South America, why he would be able to build up a big business.

Miyoshi spoke as though he had been well acquainted with Eiichi's father. He said that he had met him often at Mr. Katsumaro Tajima's house.

Yes, when he was told of it, Eiichi felt that he was very like his father. He trembled when he thought that he had inherited his father's lust for women. Was that all? Had he not inherited all his father's defects,—all his sins? As he thought

of this a shudder of repugnance ran through him. Even if he had the defence of religion he felt that it was his destiny.

Miyoshi departed on foot about nine o'clock. He was so thrifty that he never rode in jinrikishas. Murai also said that he was going, but Eiichi detained him to inquire about the details of the negotiations. Murai told them with a good deal of pride.

"Well, for the firm's name only he's paying one thousand five hundred yen," said Murai. "That's a good price, eh? Then he's going to put three thousand yen capital into the business, which ain't to be despised, and if you'll consent to work in the office he'll give you as much as you get from the insurance company. When the staff's complete he's going to advertise the company on a large scale and get us to go round for orders, and if the goods come in well, everything will go all right. Of course, the one thousand one hundred yen borrowed from Miyoshi will make the amount he pays in only one thousand nine hundred yen, but we shan't have to pay any interest on it."

Murai told his story rapidly without stopping to take breath.

"I suppose the profits will be divided according to the amount paid in," said Eiichi.

"Yes, that will be the arrangement eventually."

Eiichi made no objection, but he couldn't help thinking that one thousand five hundred yen was rather cheap for the goodwill of a firm like that of Niimi, which had been in existence for twenty years and whose name was a good advertisement, to say nothing of the telephone and the office books. But Eiichi was tired of the office and he said nothing.

CHAPTER XXXII

At Death's Door



THE affairs of the office having now been set in order, Eiichi devoted himself more zealously than ever to religious propaganda. From September the 5th he began open-air preaching in Moto-machi, at the corner of Ichida's photographic studio, in all weathers. He was dissatisfied with the obscure methods of the present-day churches and wished to go forward in his own way.

He continued preaching in Moto-machi every evening throughout September. Sometimes the police interfered with him and he was forced to suspend his task, but he was not the kind of man to waver. He preached on the doctrine of non-resistance of Tolstoy and George Fox, and of the thorough reform of civilisation. But he gained no adherents: after preaching for a full month there was nothing to show for his labours, although he poured out his sad appeal to God more fervently than Jonah at Nineveh. His perseverance in open-air preaching caused his colleagues in the insurance company to treat him as a lunatic and he could not make friends among them.

At the end of September he had a return of the fever to which he had been so long a stranger. After just a month had elapsed, on the evening of the 5th of October, about nine o'clock, as he was preaching in the street, it began to rain. Eiichi, however, did not stop preaching. For a week his voice had been getting weaker, but to him religion was not a pastime; he threw himself into it with all his strength of mind and body. When it began to rain his body was swaying to and fro, and at one time he had difficulty in getting his breath. He began to feel horribly cold, and he remembered that this was the prelude to fever.

"In conclusion," he cried, "I tell you God is love, and I will

affirm God is love till I fall. I do not mean to say that this God whom our eyes cannot see is love, but I do mean that where there is love, God and life reveal themselves."

This was his parting message. His fever was so high that he felt like falling down. He dragged his heavy body wet with the rain, as far as the Gas Company's shop, when everything grew black before his eyes and he felt a deadly sickness. "I shall fall, I shall fall," he kept repeating to himself, as he went along in front of the big glass window of the Gas Company, but he summoned up all his courage and continued to walk, till at last he fell down in the rain with a thud. He felt as if all the muscles in the lower part of his body were cramped. The strange idea came to him that he would lie there and take a quiet rest, and he remembered afterwards falling into a comatose condition, till at last he heard faintly the confused voices of the people who crowded round him.

"He's the young man who preaches at the corner of Moto-machi."

"He's fainted."

"Fainted?"

"Fainted."

He heard the words passing from mouth to mouth.

"Who is he?" asked some one, and another answered, "He's the young master at Niimi's Transport Agency in Kajiya-machi."

Eiichi could not move, and felt relieved that there were people even in that neighbourhood who knew him.

He lay in the rain for about fifteen minutes, finally recovering his powers and standing up. During the fifteen minutes that he lay there no one assisted him nor asked him to come into their house. "Society is heartless," he thought, but he got up safely and stumbled along to the jinrikisha stand at the corner of Moto-machi. The crowd of people looking on merely said "How sad!" as Eiichi, drenched to the skin, swung in a jinrikisha in his wet clothes to Kajiya-machi. When he got to the office he had not the strength to go upstairs to the sitting-room and fell down again in the entrance. Hozumi jumped up from his desk and called to Yamada, who was upstairs, and the two of them put Eiichi to bed and called a doctor by telephone.

The doctor, when he came, said it was serious and that there were symptoms of pneumonia, and for a week Eiichi was unable

to get proper sleep owing to the constant pain. His temperature was never below 104 degrees; if it fell to 100, as it did once or twice in the morning, in the afternoon it was soon 104 and over again. Also he had a very painful cough, which choked him and made him bring up blood. Hozumi and Rokuya kindly brought him ice-bags and ice-pillows and did everything they could for him, but Eiichi thought that he would like to have a woman's hand to soothe his pillow. Men were lacking in something. But then, to have a nurse would cost money, and Eiichi had no money. Murai was not kindly disposed enough to suggest having a nurse. Eiichi did not entirely forget how nice it would be to have a kind girl like Kiyonosuké or Tsuruko to nurse him, but, of course, he had not the strength to long for Kiyonosuké. Toku, the servant, was too busy in the kitchen to attend to everything. Eiichi kept telling himself that it would be better to die than suffer such pain.

On the 12th of October Dr. Williams called for the first time to ask after him; he had not known till then that Eiichi was so seriously ill. Dr. Williams placed his hand on Eiichi's forehead and prayed. "You mustn't try to do too much, Mr. Niimi," he said as he went away.

In his place came one of the lady evangelists, named Tamaé Kubo, who was eight or nine years older than Eiichi. She nursed him for some time.

Eiichi was greatly pleased at this and requested her to stay and look after him as long as possible. She was not very popular among the church members and was said to have been crossed in love, but she kindly stayed and nursed him through the night. Eiichi, seeing her kindness, decided that without Christianity mankind was worthless. He could only speak in a low voice, but he whispered in her ear, "If I get well I shall certainly enter the slums at Shinkawa and offer myself as a sacrifice to God,—if I get well, thanks to all your kindness."

Ten days passed, but there was no improvement in his condition. He had ceased coughing blood, but his pulse had become very uncertain. Sometimes it would be at 122 a minute, but on the other hand sometimes it seemed to stop altogether. It was because his heart was so irregular that the doctor thought he would die. He did not say so to Eiichi, but he told Murai and Miss Kubo.

On the 16th of October, about seven o'clock in the evening, Dr. Williams and four or five of the members of the church who knew Eiichi assembled round his pillow and began a farewell prayer meeting. The others were in silent prayer, but Eiichi heard faintly the voice of Miss Kubo as she offered up a beautiful supplication. Eiichi grasped his own wrist to feel his pulse and was surprised that he could feel nothing. But the duty which God had entrusted to him, which was to realise the spirit of Jesus by work among the poor—for the sake of accomplishing which holy ambition he wished to spend his life in the slums—convinced him that he would not die. He believed that he had leapt over death and thrust himself into that mysterious world.

He concentrated his gaze on the reflection of the electric light fixed on the pillar by the alcove. He gazed at it for one minute, two minutes,—as long as fifteen minutes, and during that time, in some indescribable way, he felt himself absorbed in the unknown wonders of reality. The point of light on which he concentrated his gaze appeared to him like a rainbow, the room in which he lay like Paradise and the common quilt that covered him like cloth of gold. It seemed as if he was being held tight by the hand of God the Father,—nay, that God was something closer to him than a father,—that God dwelt in him. It was a joyful feeling that he was immersed in God. No sooner had this joyful feeling come over him than his fever departed and he was surprised to find that his pulse had returned to normal.

The next morning Eiichi had two dreams. The first was that he had gone sea-bathing, though rather early in the season, when he suddenly developed a cold shudder, and his old disease of the lungs reappeared. When he coughed, blood rushed from his mouth and the white sand was stained with blood. It was a distressing dream.

The other dream he had at dawn was that he had left the office and was taking a journey in Korea, where he had come to some unknown place. It suddenly came into his head that Kant had been born in that village over there, and it dawned upon him gradually as he walked on that Kant was not a German, but a Japanese, and everybody had made a mistake. Norinaga Motoori,* who had lived about a hundred years ago, was a friend of Kant's. The road was so narrow that it was a

* A celebrated Japanese grammarian, lived 1730-1801.

wonder that a cart could go along it, but as it was sand you could see the marks of the wheels. Turning to the left he came to a large grove, with a small tiled house with barred windows in the centre. In front there was a rough fence, breast-high, round a pasture, and at the entrance there was a lamp, on the face of which was written "Kant," "Kant," "Kant," the last time in Japanese letters. This must be Kant's house, he thought. On the left there was another way in, with mulberry plantations on either side, and as he went along it he remembered that Kant's parents died when he was small and he was adopted into another family. Kant was an orphan, and so he constructed a great but melancholy system of philosophy. While he was thinking of this, the small Kant, with his hair tied up in two knots, dressed in a sleeved kimono reaching to his knees and a stiff sash, came through the mulberry plantation driving a cow. Just as he was thinking "Can this little boy be Kant?—just like Sontoku Nino-miya,"* he disappeared, and there was a rather small temple in his place. "What is it?" he thought. "Isn't it a temple?" And then he saw a priest reading the scriptures. "What? Is Kant enshrined as a Buddha?" he thought. There was a large crowd of people gathered together worshipping Kant as the chief Buddha, and as he looked he discovered that among the worshippers there were two Christian pastors. On the left of the temple hall there was a garden surrounded by a hedge. On the right were steps, and at the bottom a little lake or spring.

He read one of the little books they were selling in the hall. There were pictures here and there and anecdotes of Kant in his boyhood, and there were exaggerated statements about how Kant, like Yoshitsuné, could jump over nine ships, with a picture of him doing it. It also stated that the spring on the right of the hall was dug by Kant, and that the spring was deeper than that dug by Kansuké Yamamoto on Kunozan, which was over two hundred feet deep, and nobody could ever ascertain how deep it was. Also that when you looked into the spring you saw a proof that Kant had been worshipped by many pious men and maidens for the increase of their intelligence, because the spring was full of pestles that had been thrown in.

* A well known economist (1787-1856), who not only restored the prosperity of his own family but also rendered similar services for others and was finally employed by the Shogun.

The Christian pastors, seeing Eiichi standing in front of the hall, asked him where he had been to school, and he told them that he had been to the Meiji College at Shirokané, in Shiba Ward, Tokyo. They told him that they had attended the Doshisha University.* They both had long beards. Eiichi asked them if they had come there to preach Christianity, and they told him that they had come to preach in the open air. Asked where they were going to preach, they told him that they were going to preach in the grounds of the temple. "What a strange kind of Christianity!" he thought, as he left the temple.

While thinking how vigorous the worship of Kant must be in that district, he walked through the village and saw Kant and Norinaga Motoori bathing at a bathhouse. Motoori was scrubbing Immanuel Kant's back and saying, "Your study of Japanese history is quite an unprecedented success. My work on the Kojiki was only a trifle. You've only published one volume yet, but when it's all out it will arouse a revolution," and he poured some water over Kant's back. Kant only smiled. "No, really," Motoori went on, "I was quite overcome by your perspicacity. My work is lacking in critical ability and is useless."

Eiichi heard and saw all sorts of interesting things. In the next village was a shop where they sold textbooks for the elementary schools. The name of the reading book was "Kant," and when he looked inside he found it contained anecdotes about Kant when he was small, just like a story book. He was astonished that there should be such a craze for Kant and finally asked the name of the village. He was told that it was "Kotsubo," and that while it was certainly once covered by the sea, it was now a sandy waste. This was the explanation given him, and Eiichi wondered if it was in the neighbourhood of Kojima in Okayama county. Then he asked what was the name of the Temple where Kant was worshipped, and they told him Shingonshu.

There his dream ended, and he woke up to the realisation that Kant was a German after all.

Strangely enough, from that moment Eiichi began to recover, and soon he was able to amuse himself by reading the Psalms. He was in bed for three weeks altogether, every day more and more determined that he would go and live in the slums at Shinkawa. The first time that he was able to walk a little he

* A Christian University in Kyoto.

went one afternoon to call on Ueki, but Ueki was absent, having gone out as a scavenger, he was told by Mr. Masuda, with whom Ueki lived. Just as Eiichi was walking out of the alley, a child of five, who had been quarrelling with a bigger boy who was running after him, came flying along. Just when he got to the entrance of the alley, however, he fell flat on the ground with a thud, hitting his forehead on the stones and making it bleed. The sight of the blood made the youngster howl. Eiichi hastened up and, lifting the boy, found that he had cut his forehead a little. Pulling out his handkerchief, Eiichi staunched the bleeding while he asked the boy where he lived. "There, there," said the boy, and he pointed with his finger to a house with a fine gate. Eiichi knew by this that the boy was the child of Mizuta, the chief man of the district.

Eiichi went with the boy to the house to announce the accident, and found inside about half a dozen young fellows, of ferocious appearance, engaged in gambling. From the back a beautiful young woman came out and received the child.

"Bonbon," she said, "you will quarrel with the other children and then they always make you cry," and she bowed to Eiichi.

"I heard the sound of boots and wondered who it was."

"I thought it was a policeman."

"Oh, it's the Christian teacher,—him that was preaching at the crossing."

"He's a kind 'un."

The young men were all speaking at once.

Seizing the opportunity Eiichi became very friendly with Mizuta and his family, so that at last, on the evening of the 24th of December, he became the tenant of a house owned by Mizuta.

Eiichi continued to go to the office of the insurance company in the daytime, and in the evening he engaged in literary work and in preaching. He was not quite well, but there was nothing to worry about. Every afternoon he had an attack of fever at four o'clock, but he got accustomed to it and was unconcerned. He determined that if his life was to be short,—if he was to live only one or two, or, at most perhaps, three years,—if he had to die within three years, he would use all his strength to live a thoroughly good life. He was strongly inclined to the Christian Socialism of Toynbee, Frederick Maurice and Charles Kingsley.

The materialistic principles of Marx were insufficient. At the same time he was in opposition to the teaching of the gospel of love by the present-day church apart from material and economic questions. He was of the opinion that the gospel of love must not be separated from material matters;—that Love and the Flesh and the Soul were one,—that that which willed extension in time was the Soul, and that which willed extension in space was the Flesh. All things were meaningless unless they took the form of the Flesh. If God was not symbolised in the Flesh, then to him He was incomprehensible. The Logos, the Incarnation, was the mystery of religion. Chogyu Takayama's maxim, that we must, by all means, transcend modern times, he thought should read that we must incarnate ourselves for modern times. When he thought of the cry of the revolutionists in Russia—"v narod" ("Among the people"), and of Toynbee's University settlements among the poor, he felt that he must certainly go and live in the slums. Then, living among the poor, if there came an opportunity for him to do something for the Labour movement and to start Labour Unions, he would certainly seize it.

Pastor T. of the Gospel Mission Hall had lately lent him a copy of John Wesley's diary, in which he had read how Wesley, in spite of his being consumptive, had engaged in astonishingly large enterprises. He was greatly impressed when he read how Wesley, when crossing the Atlantic in a sailing-ship, saw how the Pietists, in spite of they themselves being so sick that they were vomiting blood, nursed the others on the ship. This made him all the more determined to go and live in the slums and defy death. At that time Naturalism was at the height of popularity in literary circles and he heard that many young men belonging to the church had been led astray by it.

Ueki was by this time employed by the Municipality as a scavenger and earned sixty sen a day. He was not such a bad man as Eiichi had at first thought, and he helped Eiichi in his desire to live in the slums. He told Eiichi where there was an empty house and went with him to look at it. It was in Kitahonmachi. You went along Odori to the west, and it was the second house in a long row of ten houses, in the first alley you came to. There were two rooms, the front one nine feet by six feet and

the back one six feet square. From what Ueki told him, at the end of the preceding year some one had been murdered in the house and the people in the neighbourhood said that his ghost walked. As no one would therefore go to live there the house had remained empty. This explanation greatly excited Eiichi's curiosity.

Eiichi went to Mizuta, who was the landlord, and told him that he wanted to rent the house, and as Mizuta had become very friendly with Eiichi since the accident to his child, he immediately consented. The rent was seven sen a day, which came to two yen ten sen a month, but Mizuta reduced the rent to two yen as Eiichi took the house by the month. This was at the beginning of December. Eiichi busied himself with the work of removal, but as the insurance company was very busy just then, it was not till Christmas Eve that he could complete his arrangements.

So, on Christmas Eve, the 24th of December, when all the churches were very busy thinking of nothing but Christmas, at two o'clock in the afternoon, Eiichi, with Ueki to help him, moved into his new house. Eiichi, dressed in a cotton kimono, himself pulled the handcart containing his goods from Kajiyamachi to Shinkawa. The handcart was laden with quilts, a wicker trunk containing his clothes, another filled with books, and a bamboo bookshelf. Ueki, in the meantime, was sweeping out the house to make it ready for the mats to be put in. Then they went together to buy mats. Eiichi found that he had not enough money to buy five new mats, so they bought three old mats at one yen twenty sen each, which they put down in the front room. Then, as there were no screens, they went out and bought some old ones. As they were already covered with paper, there was no trouble about that. They put the screens in at once, and that night, as he had no lamp, Eiichi spread the quilt and went to bed in the dark.

The next morning, before Eiichi was up, Ueki came and asked him if he would let him live there, giving many reasons for the request. Eiichi, however, felt that he could not trust Ueki, and therefore he did not make any definite reply. Then, in about half an hour, there came Hayashi, a gambler, and Tomita, a tall man, said to be the leader of Mizuta's gang.

Hayashi asked if Eiichi would not let him come and live in the next room, and Tomita asked if Eiichi would not accommodate a follower of his named Uchiyama.

"Business is bad," he said, "and he ain't got the money to stop at a doss house. He drinks all the time, but he says that when he becomes converted to your persuasion he'll be very careful."

Eiichi was astonished. Why were all these people, whom he had not seen and did not know, wanting to come and live with him?

Then Hayashi suddenly withdrew his own request and backed up Tomita in asking Eiichi to take in Uchiyama. Ueki also added his appeal that Eiichi would take Uchiyama into his house, and in the face of the appeal from the three men Eiichi felt helpless.

"I'll decide to-night when I see him," he said.

"Ueki," said Tomita, "you go to the Awaya [the name of a common lodging-house] and call Kyogashima."

Uchiyama was known as Kyogashima, from the name of his boss, a navvy. In the slums all the followers answer to the name of the boss.

"Right you are," he said, and hastened off.

After he had gone Tomita spoke to Hayashi about him.

"That chap's a rascal," he said. "He set fire to a house in Rokken-michi. He's only come out of prison about three months ago. Don't you be too familiar with him, Mister Niimi, or you'll get into serious trouble."

"Ay, he's a bad lot," chimed in Hayashi.

"Really?" said Eiichi.

Tomita had the air of a boss. He was a tall man with something evil in his looks. He was neatly dressed, however. Hayashi was dressed in a blue, tight-sleeved kimono and wore an apron. He had a round, clever face.

"Cold, ain't it, without any fire," he said, and, sitting himself down on the sill, he struck a match and lit a cigarette.

"Tomita," he said, "you've been behaving very bad lately. What have you done with Kuma's missus? Are you still going with her? Mister Niimi, you can't trust this chap any more than you can Ueki. He's an awful bad one. He's got a habit of going after other men's missuses."

"You shut up, Hayashi. You've said enough," said Tomita.

"Yes, but ain't Kuma to be pitied? How many other men's missuses have you had, Tomita?"

Tomita was standing in the small yard with his hands rolled up in his sleeves.

"Eleven," he said.

"Ain't he a bad fellow, Mister Niimi?" said Hayashi. "He's taken eleven missuses away from their husbands. Where are they?"

"Well, there's five across the river, and three in Shinkawa, and two in Tsutsui, and one in Hyogo. But I'm only intimate with five of 'em now."

"Is Toku among 'em?"

"What difference does it make whether she is or ain't?"

"D'you think it's fun taking another man's missus?"

"I don't take 'em; they come of themselves, so what am I to do?"

"No, no, that ain't so. Tomita, have you got any girls at your place now?"

"What d'you want to talk about 'em for before another person, and the first time I seen him too,—spoiling my reputation. . . ."

"Mister Niimi," said Hayashi, "this man's a bad one. He's got eleven or twelve girls at his place and he lives on 'em."

"Well, I wouldn't send my wife out on the streets as you do, Hayashi, so there. There ain't no bad girls at my place any longer."

"I don't live by taking people's daughters and turning 'em into bad girls, and I can't live without sending my missus out on the streets. What have you done with Tamé? Is she with you still?"

"She's at home."

"Is she still going out on the streets?"

"Um."

"There you are. What did I say? What about Sada?"

"She's there."

"And Sono?"

"She's gone back to Osaka."

"She'll come back. She looked a regular bad one. What about Shika?"

"She's there."

"Are there any more?"

"There's one more. . . . I tell 'em I can't let 'em live upstairs, but if there's one all the others come along and what am I to do?"

Eiichi listened to their conversation in astonishment. He had entered an unknown world with which he had to get acquainted.

"Tomita's a bad fellow, Mister Niimi," said Hayashi. "He takes other men's missuses away from 'em. He nearly got himself killed doing it, eh, Tomita?"

"It was a narrow squeak. It hurts still in the cold weather," and Tomita pulled back his kimono and, taking off a white bandage, showed a sword wound, a foot long, from the top to the bottom of his stomach. Then he began to tell how he got it, but in the middle Ueki came back with a round-headed man of about fifty, who was wearing a workman's coat with his master's trade-mark on the back. Eiichi got up and looked at Uchiyama. He remembered having seen him before, standing at the door of the Awaya.

As soon as Tomita saw him he hailed him.

"Kyogashima," he said, "I've asked for you to come and stop here to-night, so you can come here to sleep and won't want the doss-house money."

"Ah! . . . Well, now."

Uchiyama appeared to have bad eyes as he was continually blinking. He was evidently a man of few words as all he said was "Ah! . . . Well, now."

"There, think of him as a young disciple and let him stay," said Tomita to Eiichi.

Eiichi said nothing definite in reply, but the others had quite made up their minds.

"Ain't Christianity a religion for helping people?" they said. "If you don't help such a pitiable creature as Kyogashima then it's all a lie. He's such a pitiable fellow. He stands at the door of the Awaya all day like that, in straw sandals, and never moves. Really, he's such a strange fellow. Uchiyama, you ask if you can come and sleep here from to-night."

"Ah! Ah!" was all that Uchiyama could say. Uchiyama having been brought there and thrust upon him, Eiichi ended by weakening to the application.

Eiichi washed his face at the tap, put on his foreign clothes,

and went off to the insurance office. Tomita, Hayashi, Ueki and Uchiyama went away slowly together.

When Eiichi got back from the office about four o'clock Uchiyama was asleep under the coverlet, still dressed in his workman's coat. Eiichi thought he had come to live in a strange place.

He went to attend the Christmas service at the meeting-house in Mizuki-dori, and when he got back again he found Uchiyama waiting for him.

"There wasn't a light, so I went and got a lamp at Tomita's," he said. His face was flushed with drink.

That night Eiichi crawled under the coverlet and slept with Uchiyama. The next morning he noticed that the skin on the back of Uchiyama's hands was festering and bleeding.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Blackmail



THE next day Dr. Williams sent two baskets of toys by a jinrikishaman, stating that he had received them from the Sunday School of a foreign church, and early on the morning of the 27th of December Eiichi began to distribute the toys among the children in the slums. Some two or three hundred children flocked to Eiichi's house, and, when they heard of it, Hayashi, Ueki, and Tomita also came.

Tomita impudently picked out the toys he liked and asked Eiichi to give them to him for his own child, whereupon Hayashi and Ueki followed his example. Then some fifteen or sixteen men and women came and importuned Eiichi for toys, among them a dirty woman whom he had seen begging at Sannomiya. She was very obstinate in her demand for some of the toys and Eiichi was thrown into great perplexity as to how to distribute them. Finally he gave all that were left to the children and then fled to his office.

In the evening he hired a large room at the Awaya and held a Christmas party in the slums with the help of Dr. Williams' contribution. There he distributed cake and towels among all the hundred poor people in the lodging-house.

Since he had come to live with Eiichi, Uchiyama had scarcely eaten anything, but had continued to sleep all the time. When Eiichi inquired he found that Uchiyama had not eaten anything at all on the 26th of December and on the 27th had only had some breakfast with ten sen that Tomita gave him. Uchiyama was apparently labouring under the delusion that as he had become the disciple of a Christian he would receive his food. Eiichi decided that he must feed Uchiyama, who was a good-hearted and kindly fellow, and to whose presence in the house he had no objection, but he found some inconvenience in doing this. The truth was that Eiichi never ate any breakfast, and at

noon and in the evening went to a macaroni shop to get his meals. However, pitying Uchiyama, he immediately bought some rice and a cooking-pot and stove, and they both ate their meals together.

On the evening of the 28th of December, when Eiichi was preaching in the street, a poverty-stricken man of about forty-five, named Izu, who was suffering from rheumatism and whom he had met the evening before at the Awaya, came to him.

"It was very good of you to take Kyogashima in," he said. "Can't you take me in too? What do you think?"

Eiichi said he had no quilts, whereupon the man said that he would bring his own quilt. Eiichi then said that he had no mats, whereupon the man said that he would bring a straw mat, and finally, as he had no other excuse to offer, Eiichi agreed. The man inquired whether he could come that evening, to which Eiichi also assented, whereupon the man disappeared in the dark, dragging his heavy legs along dejectedly.

Eiichi had finished his preaching and was returning home when he heard a voice behind him calling "Master! Master!" He looked round and found it was a man of about fifty who had the air of a lumper. He was very drunk and kept repeating "Master! Master! I've got something to ask you, I have. . . . Something about Yuki."

Eiichi could not imagine what it was about.

"I'm the miserable fellow that lives next door to you—Yoshida's my name. I want you to . . . I felt so bad I've just had a drop. Master, I want you to . . ."

The man followed Eiichi home and went into the house next door. There was no lamp in the house, only a lantern, and there were no mats on the floor. Apparently they slept on the bare boards on rice-sacks. There was a small dark thing in the corner, which presumably was Yoshida's daughter Yuki. She was sleeping in her kimono without any covering.

"Hi, Yuki! Yuki!" shouted the man. "Get up and go and buy some liquor."

The misery was too great for Eiichi to bear. He went into his own house without speaking and found that Izu had already come and had put a straw mat in the next room, on which he was sleeping. Uchiyama, who had nothing else to do, had been sleeping since noon under Eiichi's warm coverlet.

Eiichi asked Izu where he had got his quilt and was told that he had hired it for one night for two sen. Looking at it by the light of the lamp Eiichi saw that written all over it, thousands of times, and forming a sort of pattern, were the words "Hired quilts must not be pawned." Eiichi understood the significance of this. Izu's occupation, he found on inquiry, was going about picking up waste rope.

Eiichi had caught the itch from Uchiyama and that night he was not able to get much sleep. Uchiyama, also, was continually scratching himself. Then about ten o'clock a tremendous quarrel began at a house opposite, where there lived a couple with the strange name of Hiyama. Listening to what it was about Eiichi found that a bully had come from Marusan, a usurer living down the street, to collect some money that had been lent at high interest. Eiichi hastened over the road to inquire what it was all about, and finding it was only a matter of fifty sen, paid the amount, whereupon Hiyama was so grateful that he worshipped Eiichi as a saint.

The next morning Ueki came early, and complaining that business was very bad, asked for the loan of another five yen, as he wanted to start again to sell rice-cakes on the shore in the spring. Eiichi had been imposed upon before by Ueki, however, and refused.

"Oh, you won't, won't you?" said Ueki. "Well, I've got my own notion about that and I've got something here that will make you," and he pulled out a short sword and showed it to Eiichi, with a strange expression on his face. Hayashi then appeared on the scene.

"It's me that must have some money," he said, and then he turned on Ueki. "What are you doing here?" he said. "I won't have you maundering round here."

At this rebuke Ueki for some reason hung his head.

"Get out! Get out!" said Hayashi, and Ueki went away dejectedly.

After this Hayashi imperatively demanded ten yen and began to look for Eiichi's purse. Then he also pulled out a short sword from his bosom and showed it to Eiichi, whereupon Tomita appeared on the scene.

"What ye doing here with that bit of steel?" said Tomita. "Get out! Get out!"

When he had silenced Hayashi, Tomita demanded a loan of thirty yen and produced a pistol.

Eiichi found himself the sport of a band of cutthroats, but he was not at all afraid of their swords and pistol. On the contrary they rather amused him; it was for such things as this that he had come to live in the slums. He did not speak, however, as he knew that they would take advantage of him if he did.

Tomita and Hayashi then began to quarrel with each other and Uchiyama got up to settle the quarrel. Eiichi also got up quietly and went to the tap to wash his face. When he got back the two had gone away together.

Uchiyama good-naturedly told Eiichi all about the ways of the blackmailer.

"They provoke a quarrel and then pretend to want to put it right,—that's the blackmailer. Don't you let 'em make you angry. . . . But that Tomita,—he's a violent one. He'll come again to-night, you see. You'd better be out of the way, master. As the day after to-morrow's the end of the year, most likely he's in need of some money."

That evening, as they expected, Tomita appeared again. He arrived at seven o'clock, when Eiichi was about to go out to pay some visits in the slums.

"You insolent brat," he said, and gave Eiichi two or three blows on the face that sent him reeling. What it was all about Eiichi did not know, but he was given to understand that it was considered insolence on his part not to accede to the demands of Tomita while he resided in the domain of Tomita's boss.

Tomita drew a short dagger from his bosom—a dreadful weapon to look at—and yelled, "I'll kill you." But Eiichi was not afraid. The expectation of death was already upon him and he made no attempt to avoid the onslaught. Nor, as an adherent to the principle of absolute non-resistance, did he make any attempt to defend himself.

Tomita flourished his dagger, and Uchiyama, who was warming himself by the stove, flew to the scene.

"Here, what's it all about?" he said. "There ain't no need to get in such a fury, is there?" and he wrenched the dagger out of Tomita's hand.

Tomita, catching sight of the stove, bounded into the room

and made as if to throw it at Eiichi, who was standing in the yard, but suddenly changing his mind, he threw it down on the mats. The heap of burning charcoal was scattered all over the room, and Uchiyama had to jump back again and pick it up. While he was doing this Eiichi fled by the back gate and went down to the shore to pray.

He returned about eleven o'clock to find that one of the screens had been broken to pieces. He went to bed without saying anything, although he thought what a rough fellow Tomita was.

On the 30th of December, Tomita came to kick up a row both in the morning and evening, and finally Uchiyama advised Eiichi to give him some twenty yen or so. "It's better to do that than to get hurt," he said.

Eiichi was of the same opinion, and therefore he gave Tomita twenty yen out of his monthly salary, which was only twenty-five yen, and the small New Year present he had received from the insurance company. Ueki also was not to be put off when he learnt that Eiichi had some money, and finally he walked off with another five yen. After Eiichi had bought mats and screens for the back room he had not a farthing left out of the small amount of salary he had saved.

Such was the dark and miserable end of the year 1909 which Eiichi spent in the slums. He had only one consolation, and that was that he had made friends even though he had only resided there four days. One of these, of course, was the old man Uchiyama, and another Izu. There were others, however, who looked up to him and called him "Teacher," and they were the children of the slums. The slum children were very fond of Eiichi and Eiichi was very fond of them.

Every afternoon Jinko, Toraichi, Hanaé, Kazu and Kumazo impatiently waited for Eiichi's return at four o'clock. In the morning they came and played in front of Eiichi's house in the narrow alley, waiting until he returned. Then at four o'clock, when they saw Eiichi appear, they rushed along the alley to welcome him. "Teacher, have you got any toys to-day?" was their first greeting. Eiichi would stroke Jinko's head and put his hands on the heads of Toraichi and Hanaé and the others in turn. Then the children, all hanging onto "teacher's" coat-tails, would accompany him to his house.

Besides these there was Eiichi's first convert. At the slum Christmas party he had given at the Awaya on the 27th of December there was a man of nearly forty who could not stand, but was carried there by his wife on her back. He lived in a small room in Azuma-dori. From Eiichi's inquiries it appeared that the man had been unable to stand for the last four months owing to rheumatism. On the evening of the 28th of December, the man's wife, an amiable-looking woman, came to Eiichi.

"Master," she said, "I hope you'll excuse me, but won't you say a Christian prayer for us?"

Eiichi went at once and prayed for the man's recovery. Then on the morning of the 30th of December, when Eiichi was setting out to attend office for the last time that year, he saw Deguchi, the man who could not stand, coming along the alley leaning on a long bamboo pole. His hair was all standing on end, like that of Goemon Ishikawa,* the famous robber, and his face was wan,—a figure typical of the slums.

Deguchi said that from the time that Eiichi had prayed for him he had begun to get the use of his legs back and he had come to thank Eiichi. From that time Deguchi became a propagandist of Christianity in the slums.

On the 1st of January, 1910, which happened to be a Sunday, Eiichi held his first evening service in his small room, and the news being passed round, Deguchi came with six or seven of his friends, so that the small room was full. There was Ito, the rope-picker, Ishino, the well-cleaner, and his wife, an old pipe mender, and an old rag-picker. Adding to these Izu and Uchiyama, the evening service was a pleasurable one.

Eiichi felt very happy. He spoke as simply as he could, and each said a prayer before they went. Some of them mixed up prayers and thanksgiving and submitted humble thanks to be cured of their ills.

Eiichi did not understand how it was that he had been able to spread Christianity so quickly, but after the service he understood from Deguchi why it was. It was because Deguchi had gone about telling every one. The life in the slums fired Eiichi's youthful ardour.

* Lived at the end of the 16th century. He and his son were executed by being boiled in oil in the dry bed of a river at Kyoto.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Baby-Killing



EARLY on the morning of the 2nd of January Ueki came bringing a man named Marui. (Ueki had a habit of coming early so as to catch Eiichi still in bed.) Marui earned his living as a carter for a mat-factory. He stated that his sister had been sent to prison for gambling and that as the baby she had adopted had died the previous night during her absence, and he had no money to pay for the funeral, he had come to ask Eiichi if he would not give him some. Eiichi immediately assented and went with the man to his house. Marui and his family of six lived in a room nine feet by six in Azumadori, the other room in the house, of six feet square, being occupied by his sister and her two children. The adopted child that had died was only three months old and, of course, was not yet weaned. They had no money to buy milk, however, and as they had to feed it on rice-gruel and rice-water it had died. The body was laid on a dirty hired quilt and was covered with the soiled woollen kimono that had been given with the baby. Eiichi lifted the kimono and looked at the baby's face. The sight of it filled him with inexpressible horror. Its eyes were sunk in its head and bloodshot, its cheeks fallen in, and its hands dried up like leaves on a withered bough. Eiichi inquired into the circumstances and learnt that the man's sister had been dazzled by the offer of five yen if she would adopt the baby, and had taken the money, since she was very poor, although she knew it meant the murder of the child.

Eiichi went back to his house and took out his winter kimono and mantle from the wicker trunk. These he took to the pawn-broker, getting six yen thirty sen for them, five yen of which he handed to Marui. Marui consulted with Ueki and then went to "Tabero" to ask him to arrange the funeral. "Tabero," who

up to six months ago had been living with Yoshida's "missus," a woman called "Inu," lived opposite to Eiichi. The occupation of "Tabero," who was also called "Oitabero," was to arrange funerals for those who were not able to do it themselves. His work consisted in placing the body in an old tobacco packing-case or orange-box, hoisting it on his shoulder and carrying it to the crematorium at Kasugano.

That day, towards evening, "Tabero" put the body of the baby in an orange-box and set off with it from Marui's house.

Eiichi felt very depressed at the sight. He was overcome with aversion at the crimes of the slums and in his despair he felt inclined to curse God. He felt that God was not Love, but the Lord of Darkness, Despair, Death and Poverty.

But the unkind Creator, who had thus given Eiichi a glimpse of death, did not stop there. On the morning of the 5th of January, Ishino, the well-cleaner, who had attended the New Year service, came and asked him to bury his baby, who had died. Eiichi also complied with this request. He went to Ishino's house, which was in Azuma-dori and was rented from Fujimoto, and found Ishino and his wife sitting there listlessly. He learnt very soon that the baby that had died was an adopted child.

"This is the child," said Ishino, and he took out of the corner of the room the body of a child still smaller than that at Marui's house. It was rolled up in three cushions, tied together with a soft sash, and looked like a doll. Its eyes were not sunken like those of Marui's child, but its face was livid and its head was covered with scabs. It was an ugly baby, and Eiichi felt that its ugliness had prevented much interest in its rearing.

It was necessary to get a certificate of the cause of death and Eiichi hastened to call a doctor named Tazawa who lived near. The spectacled Tazawa, whether through laziness or because the house was very dirty, did not go in, but stood in the yard.

"Let's have a look at the child," he said, and Ishino showed it to him as he had shown it to Eiichi.

"Oh, this is it, eh? Malnutrition,—I see, I see," and he went away without trying to find out if there were any signs of life or even touching the body. Eiichi followed him.

"Those people, you know," said the doctor, "they live on adopted children. There's lots of them do it in this neighbourhood and it gives me a great deal of trouble."

Eiichi got the death certificate and called in at Deguchi's on his way back. There he heard some bad tales about Ishino.

"That's the third time Ishino's done that," said Deguchi. "He adopts a child and kills it, adopts a child and kills it, and then each time he moves because he's too ashamed to stop in the neighbourhood. He'll be punished for his sins yet. His missus is so lazy that she has to do this," and Deguchi made an indecent sign with his fingers. "He sends his wife on the streets every night and although he's so old he acts as pimp for her. That's the way he lives. He came here this morning and said he'd no money for the funeral and would I ask the Christian teacher. He'll be punished for his sins. When he adopts a child he gets five or ten yen and his eyes are dazzled by the sight of such big money. Then when the child dies he ain't got no money for the funeral and he goes round begging it in the neighbourhood like a beast. I told him I couldn't do it, but then you've come here to help the poor and live in this terrible Shinkawa, and if you can help him please do so. I'll talk to him well and tell him he'll have to turn over a new leaf."

Deguchi went on repeating the same thing over and over again, but Eiichi understood from him what Ishino's circumstances were and went again to Ishino's house, where he told him that he would bring the money for the funeral afterwards.

Uchiyama understood Eiichi's feelings in the matter. "I'll go to the pawnbroker's for you," he said, and went off with two of Eiichi's kimonos. Five yen was lent on them and Eiichi took the money at once to Ishino's house. There were only left in Eiichi's wicker trunk five kimonos, one of which was ragged. Eiichi faced each new trial as it arose with greater fortitude, although they made his heart throb.

When he got back from the office the coffin had not yet been removed from Ishino's house, as Ishino wished Eiichi to hold a Christian funeral service and they were waiting for him to return. There, for the first time in his life, in that small room in the slums, Eiichi conducted a Christian funeral service. He did not preach any sermon, however. All he said was that those were happier who quitted this sinful world and, like that baby, flew to Heaven.

On the conclusion of the service Ishino himself shouldered the coffin and took it to Kasugano. Eiichi followed in silence. The

early winter sun was already sinking behind Mount Tekkai at Suma when Eiichi stood before the crematorium at Kasugano. He hid his face from Ishino and wept. The lights of Kobé shone brilliantly. The crematory cart rattled as the man placed the coffin on it.

CHAPTER XXXV

Misery in the Slums



“**W**HY am I destined to all this suffering?” thought Eiichi as he returned from the brightness of Moto-machi to the dimness of Shinkawa. “Am I like Jeremiah, destined to tears? I am tired of weeping over my own sorrows; now I must weep over the sorrows of others. I have made a mistake. Such persons as I am, however much agony they suffer, or however much effort they put forth, are useless. The pestilence has entered into the slums. It has attacked the young girls like a snake,—a snake tattooed on the back. Tomé, the prostitute, died the day before yesterday. Yesterday her father was sent to the infectious diseases hospital. This morning, Kawamata, the boatman, was attacked by the same disease. Terrible! Terrible! The care of the sufferers from the pestilence, the protection of the erring sheep, has fallen on you, Eiichi Niimi, you miserable man! You also will catch the disease and die quickly, and then you will be freed from the sufferings of the world.”

With money it would be possible to bring relief, but with no money, no food,—with himself and his fellow lodger compelled to eke out their means by two meals a day, and those only of gruel and pickled plums, which they had to divide between them,—what an unhappy creature he was to be compelled to make money his ideal. In this world of beautiful women, silk dresses, and fine music, he alone dreamed of social reconstruction, rotted in the slums, and, weeping, directed funerals. Why was it? Society was all astray, but it was better not to say so; better to wait for a time of great social upheaval. Till then he would console the needy as far as was in his power. He would wait for the new day,—for the birth of the new Christian morality

which would take the place of the rotten morality of the capitalists of to-day. The road to the Crucifixion was along the alleys of the slums.

So he thought as he took his accustomed way across Higurashi Bridge. He was struck with the poetical allusion in the name of the bridge—the “hand to mouth” bridge, symbolical of the lives of the poor workers.

On the 8th of January, which was a Sunday, he held his first Sunday School in his small room. There were seventy children present, and as they all made a noise it was impossible to make oneself heard or do anything. But at any rate it gave all the children in Shinkawa an opportunity of knowing Eiichi.

He went to the morning service at the Hyogo meeting-house, and after the service Dr. Williams told him that in order to assist his evangelical work in the slums, he would be allowed twenty yen a month. Dr. Williams also encouraged him in his work. Eiichi accepted the offer with thanks.

That afternoon two sisters belonging to the Women’s Reform Society came to see him, and after examining his house went away crying. Eiichi thought that if the scene made them cry, why did they not come to live there also.

Ueki continued to threaten him for money. In the middle of a prayer meeting, when Eiichi was praying that the hearts of those present might be inclined to love their enemies, Ueki broke in.

“Damned rot,” he said. “I suppose you mean I’m the enemy. If there’s a God that answers prayers, then pray that the fire in this stove won’t burn anything when I throw it about,” and he upset the stove that was in the middle of the room.

Ito and Ishino began hurriedly putting the burning charcoal back into the stove.

“There you are,” reviled Ueki. “You and your God! Ain’t the fire still burning?”

Then, after the prayer meeting, when they had all gone, Ueki, who was drunk, began to go through the military drill in his bare feet in the lane outside, under the beams of the cold, wintry moon.

“Eyes front! Attention! Right wheel, turn! As you were, turn! Back to the path of virtue, turn!” he kept shouting.

Then Yoshida, who had also returned drunk, shouted from the

sack in which he was sleeping, "Shut up, you beast. Don't make such a noise," and he began howling like a wolf.

This did not make Ueki angry; it was only against Eiichi that he used abusive language. He had meant to get some money from Eiichi that day, and he had been hunting for him at the transport agency's office in Hyogo, at the meeting-house in Mizuki-dori, and at the Ikuta church.

Finally Ueki entered the house and got Kyogashima to apologise for him to Eiichi. Ueki seized the skirt of his own kimono in his teeth and whined an apology also, ending up by asking Eiichi to put him up for the night. Eiichi told him to go and wash his feet, whereupon he said that he would sober himself by pouring cold water from the tap over his body. At last he came creeping back and snuggled his shivering body up to Eiichi's.

At other times, when he had no money, Ueki would pursue Eiichi with a dagger. Eiichi would try to hide himself, whereupon Ueki, who knew that Eiichi would never report the matter to the police, became even more threatening. Seizing a Bible, he would commence cutting it to pieces, repeating all the time, "This is what I'm going to do to you, you Niimi."

Eiichi knew, however, that Ueki would not commit a crime, and although he got out of his way, he was not afraid of his weapon. He was beginning gradually to understand the methods and disposition of the evil-minded and therefore he had no fear.

In the midst of this confusion there arrived a sick man named Chukichi Shibata, who, having no money to pay for his lodging, had been directed to Eiichi's by the people at the Awaya. He said he was a weaver at Osaka, twenty-eight years of age, born at Kobé. His real father was dead, but he had an adopted father who was head of the second fire-brigade in Hyogo. He had sunk very low through dissipation, but did not want to return home.

Eiichi remembered how in the summer, two years before, when he was living a hard life at the dockers' lodging-house, the place was kept by Shibata's father, and he therefore at once decided to assist the man. His house was very small, however, and moreover, when he got a doctor to examine the man, it was found that he was suffering from intestinal tuberculosis. Within two weeks the man was unable to stand and his internal organs seemed to be rotting. In truth he smelt horribly. Eiichi and

Uchiyama had to nurse him. Taking pity on Izu they got him to remove to the next room, and the room six feet square became the sick room.

Eiichi, however, found the house too small and decided that he would have to take another. Just at that time Mr. Takeda, Mr. Yao and Mr. Hashida, of the Theological Department of the Kwansei Gakuin, kindly offered to take charge of the slum Sunday School, and thinking that Eiichi's house was too small, they hired a house of six mats (nine feet by twelve) two doors off. This was one mat larger than the previous house and Eiichi and Uchiyama moved into it.

The Sunday School and the evening services were held in this house of six mats. Next door there was a house in which lived a prostitute named Shika and Eiichi soon became friendly with her and the two other girls that lived with her, and from them gathered particulars of the life of prostitutes in Shinkawa and also at Tobita and Nagatsuka in Osaka. Afterwards Eiichi found that one of the girls in the house, named Hatsu, was one who had been mentioned in the papers the previous December on account of some physical defect. She was an ugly-looking girl with protruding teeth. Eiichi advised her to try and reform, and Hatsu told him that if she could find any other way of getting her living she would reform at once. Eiichi thereupon went to see Mrs. Nobué Tomishima, who was running a private infirmary and, after explaining the case to her, got her to take Hatsu. Eiichi himself accompanied Hatsu to the infirmary, carrying her clothes in a bundle.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Sufferings of the Poor



IZU went out every day to pick up rope. Uchiyama, on the other hand, idled away his time, although he got up early every morning and faithfully cooked the rice for Eiichi and the sick man, a fact which impressed Eiichi.

Life in the slums exactly suited Eiichi—in fact he had never found a life which suited him as well as the intense life in the slums. Every morning early, and late every evening, he went through the alleys of the slums and saw how each was making an effort to live, however small. Eiichi was not a little moved by these small efforts.

One time, while he was walking round, he came upon an ugly, lame woman of thirty, named Fuji, formerly a prostitute, who lived in a small room for which she paid three sen a day. She had fallen eight days behind in her rent and the landlord had turned her out. Fuji was crying in a loud voice and her pock-marked, ugly daughter was crying by her side. Inside the house a rough-looking man, who had come to collect the rent, was tearing up the mats.

“What’s the use of letting a house to beggars like you when there’s lots of people want to take it?” he was muttering, half to himself. “Cheating people out of their money day after day. How d’you suppose I’m going to live?”

“How was I to pay the rent when I hadn’t no money?” said the woman. “We ain’t had any food for the last two days, because there wasn’t any. If I’d had any money I’d ’a’ paid you first of all, but business is bad and I can’t go about picking up things, or doing as some does, stealing cotton from the carts. I tell you I ain’t got no money.”

A crowd of poverty-stricken people had assembled and they were expressing their sympathy for Fuji. A beggar-woman named Haru, seeing Eiichi there, appealed to him.

"Help her, master," she said. "It's a shame. She ain't had any food for two days, poor thing."

Eiichi paid the rent for eight days for Fuji and promised to send her some rice. When he got home he found Masa, the wife of Yasu, who lived at the back of his house, standing by the side of the well, with a baby strapped on her back, washing something blackish which was hardly distinguishable as rice. Her eyes were red and swollen and as she had only one thin kimono on, although it was the coldest time of the year, the baby was placed next to her bare skin to keep it warm.

Eiichi asked her why she was crying.

"It's very good of you to ask, master," she replied. "My man wallops me because I ain't got any rice, but he never brings anything home from the funerals and I ain't got any money to buy rice, and as you know, master, I've got six or seven hungry mouths at home to fill, and I've borrowed money from everybody I could. 'Go and get some money and buy some rice,' says he. 'Can't you do that? A lot of good you are.' That's the way he bullies me, but I can't go out like other women and get it on the streets, so I went to Nada, where all the saké breweries are, and gathered up the rice fallen on the ground. I thought of making some gruel with it, but it's so mixed with earth that it ain't eatable. My man puts all the blame on me and always says he's going to kill me or wallop me."

The woman's tears pattered down into the tub.

Eiichi's eyes quickly filled with tears in sympathy, and without saying anything he retired. A fit of hysterical weeping overcame him.

"God," he cried, "why do the poor suffer thus?"

He determined that henceforward he would confine his wardrobe to one kimono and took an oath to God that he would touch neither meat nor fish, in order to be able to help these poor people. His remaining clothes he determined to sell and to give the money to the poor. He would become an apostle of one kimono.

Immediately he called Uchiyama and told him to take the remaining clothes to the pawnbroker,—the warm winter kimono, the foreign clothes, everything else,—all, all of them.

But Uchiyama admonished him with an old man's wisdom.

"You won't get anything on the foreign clothes," he said.

"They'll go dirt cheap. A yen or a yen and a half's about all you'll get. Much better wear 'em," and he refused to take them to the pawnshop.

Eiichi therefore kept back the foreign suit and pawned all the others, receiving on them altogether seven yen thirty-six sen. With this money he immediately went to Yasu's house at the back. Going in at the back-door he found one-eyed Yasu, still in his workman's coat because he had no kimono, rolled up asleep in a greasy, hired quilt. There were no screens or anything in the house and the shutters had to be kept closed in broad daylight. A sickly-looking child was sleeping at Yasu's feet under the same quilt. His wife was cooking the broken rice at the stove, which she was feeding with pieces of old clogs, and the pot had just begun to boil.

Eiichi came up silently behind her.

"Here's a bit for you to get some rice with, missus," he said, and he handed her a five-yen note.

"Oh, it's too much," she said. "All this?"

Eiichi silently laid the five-yen note on the floor at the entrance and went off to Fuji's house, where he left two yen.

That evening Yasu, having bought saké with the five yen he had received from Eiichi, went to Eiichi's house, drunk, to thank him.

"Mr. Niimi," he said, "you're a regular saint, you are. You make me worship you. This Shinkawa, you know, it's an awful place, and no one knows what may happen to you, but I'll give my life to save you if anything does happen."

The saké had given him fluency even if it had made him somewhat inarticulate, and he made the vow with great emphasis.

CHAPTER XXXVII

"Fighting Yasu"



THE sending of the girl to the infirmary had offended the feelings of the people next door and after an interval of four days Shika's husband came to kick up a row. He came with a naked sword in his hand,—a sword of two and a half feet in length.

"Is Niimi in?" he asked.

Eiichi was just then eating his evening meal, but showed no alarm as he answered, "Yes, what is it?"

"What is it? Well, I want to know what you mean by it," and the man brought the back of the sword down right in the middle of the desk which served as the table for meals, sending the cups and plates and the food flying in all directions.

Uchiyama, who was doing some cleaning out at the back, came in hurriedly.

"What's the use of getting in such a fury?" he said. "Just moderate your feelings and tell us what it's all about."

Uchiyama held up his wet hands and winked his weak eyes.

"I heared you was awful angry about Hatsu," he went on, "but the teacher here, he's come to Shinkawa to help people,—everybody that's in trouble, you know. Hatsu, she asked him,—said she wanted to reform. The teacher ought to have told you about it, perhaps,—what he was doing, but, you see, he thought she was doing what you'd told her. . . ."

A great crowd had assembled at the entrance and watched what was going on. Eiichi sat still, feeling rather embarrassed. Shika's husband, who was commonly known as "Osaka," continued to talk excitedly.

"Look here, Uchiyama, I ain't saying it's wrong of him to come and live here in Shinkawa since he's come here to help people, but he ain't going to put it over me with his insolence.

We got our own customs in Shinkawa, and he may turn up his nose at us taking a bit o' the girls' earnings, though I don't want to make 'em prostitutes and I've got to live somehow. Now, you Niimi," and he flourished the sword and made to strike Eiichi, who was sitting quietly at the desk praying.

Uchiyama put his arms round Osaka.

"Look out what you're doing," he said. "You'll be sorry if you have to go to prison. You'd better let me mind that bit of steel for you."

Uchiyama tried to take the sword out of Osaka's hand, but Osaka would not let go and continued to revile Eiichi while struggling in Uchiyama's embrace.

"Look here, you Niimi, where have you hidden Hatsu? I'll pay you for this. D'you want to take my living away? I don't want to go on struggling for ever in this Shinkawa, pimping for prostitutes. If I'm a trouble to you I'll get out if you lend me my travelling expenses. What d'you think I am? Give me a hundred yen,—fork it out, and I'll leave any time."

"You give me that bit of steel," said Uchiyama determinedly. "It ain't safe."

Shika had now come with two of the girls in the house, and was looking on silently. In the alley an enormous crowd had collected.

Then from the back Yasu, the undertaker's man, appeared.

"Yasu's come, Yasu's come." The report was passed round quickly by those nearest the door. Yasu was generally called "Fighting Yasu" because of his fierce quarrelsomeness, and the people round the door were afraid that the affair would develop into a terrible fight. Eiichi also thought that Yasu would make matters worse. Yasu, of course, had come according to his promise that he would protect Eiichi as a mark of his gratitude.

"Here, Osaka," he said, "what ye talking about?"

At this direct attack by the one-eyed Yasu the well-tattooed Osaka dropped his frightful scowl and silently allowed Uchiyama to take the sword.

"We know all about it now," said the resourceful Uchiyama, "so you'd better go home."

Osaka began to retire in silence.

Yasu looked as if he had just got out of bed. His face was dirty and, although it was cold, he wore only his workman's coat

and no trousers. Standing in the yard in this condition he asked Eiichi what was the cause of the trouble. Uchiyama, however, hurried Osaka off, and they could hear him talking to Shika and the girls as they went along the alley, till their voices died away in the distance. The crowd also followed Osaka and collected round the corner house.

Yasu was talking about how brave he was in a fight, when a little girl peeped in at the door. She was Kiyo, Osaka's adopted daughter, an attractive little girl of twelve years of age. Eiichi had given her a doll at Christmas time and after that she was always coming to his house. She looked at Eiichi with such a cheerful smile that it would seem she had already forgotten all about her adopted father's behaviour.

Eiichi called her, but she drew back. To distract his mind from Yasu's annoyance Eiichi went out and brought Kiyo in.

"Is your father angry with me, Kiyo?" he asked.

"I don't know, teacher," she said gently, "but please forgive him."

Her gentle plea brought the tears to Eiichi's eyes.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Sanko



AFTER that, for three weeks Shika and Osaka and Kiyo never showed their faces. Shibata gradually grew worse and worse, but as Eiichi had to go to the insurance office every day, he left Uchiyama to attend to him during the day, himself taking charge when he returned at four o'clock in the afternoon. Shibata got weaker every day. His hair fell out pitifully as his illness increased and moreover his face swelled and became bloated. But, however ill he was, when he saw Eiichi his look was that of one worshipping a saint, and worship Eiichi as a saint he did. His voice became weak, apparently through tuberculosis of the throat, but it was clear that he was very grateful.

Eiichi did everything he could for the sick man, and Izu, who slept in the next room, expressed his astonishment, saying that he could never have done it. Eiichi thought that there was something strange in Izu's praise, and then, a week after the Osaka incident, Izu came to him with a proposal.

"Master," he said, "you know Sanko, the bean-curd seller,— he stops at the Gifuya [a common lodging-house], but it ain't easy for him because he's sick. He asked me if I wouldn't apply to you to know if he couldn't come and live here. I want him to come and live with me."

Eiichi immediately consented and Sanko, the bean-curd dealer, whose real name was Sanzo Fujita, came directly. He was a lazy fellow, however, very different from Izu. Uchiyama didn't like going out to work, though he worked well in the house, but Sanko would not even lend a hand at the cooking although he was being fed. He had a livid, bloated face, and had little vitality. His heart was weak and he himself acknowledged that he had syphilis. He never went out like Izu to pick up waste

rope, but had come with the expectation that Eiichi would support him. Thus Eiichi found himself obliged to keep four people on his salary of twenty-five yen a month. Rice was only about seven sen a quart, it was true, but then he had four people to feed. Eiichi decided to give up his midday meal and the four of them agreed to live on rice gruel, pickled plums and bean soup. Uchiyama for some reason seemed especially pleased, as though he knew the reason, and even the sick man was grateful. The only person who was dissatisfied was Sanko, and he and Uchiyama had collisions every day, which ended in Uchiyama scolding him as a worthless fellow, whereupon Sanko was silenced. But he did not stop complaining of the gruel, and at every meal he and Uchiyama were bound to quarrel.

Sanko was a man of thirty-four, but he was no exception to the rule that the workers generally look ten years older than they are, and he looked over forty. His hair was as long as Goemon Ishikawa's and he never attended to it. He was such a coward that he was afraid to go anywhere by himself at night because he thought that he would see a ghost. The reason was this:

Sanko had been an orphan since childhood and was sent out early to work for a bean-curd seller. Four years before, while he was in the employ of a bean-curd seller in Naka-michi, he had one day been sent to Wakinohama to sell some curd, when a drunken man struck him and smashed up the bean-curd he was carrying. Sanko then got angry and struck the drunken man with the carrying-pole, hitting him on a dangerous spot and killing him instantaneously. A policeman arrived and Sanko was taken into custody. He spent a year in prison and was then released on the ground of insufficient evidence, but ever since then he had been afraid of the man's ghost appearing and developed such cowardice that he was unable to go on working. Whenever he went to a new place to work every person seemed to him like the man he had killed.

Eiichi pitied Sanko and asked Uchiyama to treat him kindly as he had no friends. So Sanko was fed and supported by Eiichi.

CHAPTER XXXIX

At the Office



EIICHI went on working with his pen every day in a very humdrum style. He had no concern with the policy of the company; his business every day was to enter figures in the account books. There were fourteen or fifteen other clerks and he was quite an insignificant person among them, but of that he took little account. In the autumn of the previous year, when he had had pneumonia and, although he had been given up, had recovered, he had determined that he would never complain about anything in his work. He did not approve of capitalism, but he could not feel any ill-will against the director and manager of the company. He always bowed to them politely and never disobeyed their instructions. It was not that he did not know that he was assisting in developing their surplus value; he saw no other course save that of serving them faithfully. There was no need to inquire whether he did this for the sake of others or for himself; if others profited by it so much the better. He determined that while immersed in a life of service he would quietly await an opportunity for raising the flag of revolt against capitalism. He therefore performed his work cheerfully. Also he thought that if a time for Socialism ever came, if the people who now faithfully served the capitalists did not do the same for society, then perfect Socialism was not possible. The services being performed to-day were an introduction to the services required under Socialism. He respected everybody,—all the people in the slums,—Uchiyama, Izu, Fujita. Even if each one was a failure in life, for their failure he respected them, because he had discovered that each of them had some honourable reason for failure. He respected even Tomita, Hayashi and Ueki. He discovered that from one point of view he must love them and thus he respected them. He respected all the beggars and prosti-

tutes of the slums. Since these persons possessed honourable existences, even if they had taken the wrong direction, there was yet time for repentance, and he respected them. Eiichi had entered into the spirit of Jesus, who came down to the world as the Saviour of mankind. As all must be saved, so all must be respected. Those who were not respected were not worth saving.

It was from this point of view that Eiichi respected all. He hated capitalism, but he could not hate people. He loved capitalists in the same way as he loved prostitutes and gamblers. He himself was liked as a good-natured fellow by all in the office.

Eiichi was especially respected by Miyamoto and Taruya, whom he had come to know more particularly after the Maruni affair. His work in the slums was the talk of the office. Taruya, who was said to come of a poor family, took especial interest in Eiichi, and one day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, when the office was closing, gave him a fifty-sen silver piece to give away in the slums. This was the first sympathetic offering that Eiichi had received from a friend, and as he took it he had a melancholy feeling. It seemed to him that he was a very shiftless fellow,—even that an insult was being offered him. But nevertheless he received it gratefully as a gift from God. Eisaku Kobayashi, the manager, when he heard Eiichi's story from Tomiya, contributed ten yen. Eiichi also took this as a token of goodwill.

Everybody in the office thus came to appreciate Eiichi, and when a beggar passed the office they would call chaffingly to him that a friend of his was passing. But they all respected him.

CHAPTER XL

Children of the Slums



EIICHI continued to suffer from fever. When the office closed for the day he felt all at once tired out and dragged his heavy legs to the slums, feeling as if his body did not belong to him. As soon as he got back to the slums he would throw himself down at the entrance still in his foreign clothes, and wait until the fever had subsided. Usually it would rise nearly to a hundred degrees. He knew that he had never been completely cured of his illness. When he caught a little cold and sneezed, drops of blood came from his lungs, causing him some distress. When he looked at those drops of blood and thought of his fate a shiver went through him and he was afraid. It was as though death stared him in the face. He would soon be dead and he would leave nothing accomplished. The improvement of conditions in the slums, of course, would not be accomplished; his literary work, his ideas, his faith, his art,—nothing of the things that he took an interest in would be left completed. Every day in the afternoon the fever overtook him in the same way. If he had to take to his bed at last, he thought with a sinking heart, who would look after him? No doubt Uchiyama would nurse him, but the thought did not bring him any comfort. Who would support him? He felt inclined to weep at life's loneliness.

Yes, that was the reason why the poor would never be otherwise than poor. It was not because they had no money that they were poor, but because of their loneliness. That was the suffering of the poor,—to be in a big city without a friend. When he thought of his own position his sympathy went out to the poor.

From the end of January and all through February he preached in the street till his voice failed and he could not speak. He felt anxious lest he should have developed tuberculosis of the throat.

These distressing thoughts always came to him when he threw himself down in the entrance to his six-mat room. At such times he would think especially of his stepmother at Awa and wonder how she was getting on, of his two younger brothers with his uncle at Osaka, of Emi, who had gone to far-off Formosa, but was soon to return, as she wrote. He thought how fate had scattered the family, and the customary tears fell.

"I am become one of the poor," he thought. "Ah, if Emi were only here, she would nurse me when I was sick."

At such times also his thoughts would turn to Tsuruko Tamiya, who had not written to him again. But for Tsuruko Tamiya he felt no more desire.

When this melancholy fit overcame him he would jump up and go out in silence to gather all the children of the slums together and take them out into an open space, where they assembled with a great deal of noise.

The children of the slums were very beautiful, especially the children of the pariah class. Embracing the babies and beautiful children of the pariahs, and thinking to himself with interest and delight that God is Love, he would spend the sad winter twilight in their company until the fever suddenly subsided. It was a febrifuge for his fever,—to call the children from their cramped quarters to come out and play. A great number of children gathered in the twilight,—it was not uncommon for a hundred children to be there. When there was such a large number he made them sing songs,—the Western school songs, while they imitated the goose-steps. "The cat's caught the rat and the weasel's run away," they would repeat as they stood in long lines playing "Cat and Rat." Eiichi would notice casually in the ranks of the children Jinko, Toraichi, Hanaé, Kazu, Kumazo and his latest friend Kiyo, besides many others. All the boys and girls were fond of Eiichi. There were even some who were mischievous on purpose so that they could attract his attention.

The Sunday School was well attended, but Mr. Takeda, Mr. Yao and Mr. Hashida of the Kwansei Gakuin grew very perplexed. Some of the children came bare-footed, but forgot when the school was over whether they had come in clogs or not. The result was that some of them would go off in any clogs that happened to be there without saying anything, causing the teach-

ers much embarrassment. As the clogs worn by the children were mostly old ones that had been thrown into the dust-boxes, and, moreover, odd ones that did not match, they did not know themselves which were which, as there were often as many as a hundred and twenty or thirty old clogs. Even when one of the teachers acted as clog-keeper, when school was over and the children were going, there would be great disorder. There was no mark at all by which the children could tell which were their own clogs, which resulted in quarrelling and fighting.

The children had not the least idea what the Sunday School was for, and Eiichi sometimes doubted whether it was much good and whether it would not be better merely to foster peace among the children.

Besides all this confusion there was in the neighbourhood a depraved boy, an imp of twelve years old, named Matsuzo Iwanuma, who was a relative of "Fighting Yasu." While school was going on this boy would throw stones through the screens or would bring dogs to bark at them, or collect five or six other boys outside, who would call out repeatedly "Amen! Somen!* Cold somen!" and hide the clogs of the good children inside. Eiichi drove him away, but it was useless. The only way to reform the children and be successful in the work of the Sunday School, Eiichi felt, was to take Matsuzo into his house. Eiichi went to see "Fighting Yasu" about it, and finally it was arranged that Matsuzo should come to live with him. Eiichi's "family" was thus increased to six persons.

Dr. Williams contributed fifteen yen a month. That was not all. He brought Mrs. Pearson, the wife of the minister of the famous Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue, New York, who was in Japan on a visit, to see the slums and introduced Eiichi to her. Mrs. Pearson was greatly interested in Eiichi's work, and before she went away she left a cheque for five hundred and fifty yen with Dr. Williams. Moreover she left a message for Eiichi that when she returned from an inspection of the evangelical work in China and Korea she would like to have a long talk with him.

Eiichi was grateful from the bottom of his heart for this

* Somen is a kind of vermicelli. The children were ridiculing the sound of the word "Amen," which in Japan is regarded as the distinguishing Christian prayer.

five hundred and fifty yen. He rejoiced as the Israelites rejoiced when they gathered manna in the wilderness. With this five hundred and fifty yen it would be possible to feed five or six people in the slums for two years. He immediately substituted rice for the gruel and pickled plums on which they had been living. He also returned to three meals a day instead of two. The words in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," were appreciated by him for the first time.

Now that he had money he could buy bedclothes. He bought ten second-hand quilts and provided Uchiyama with a separate bed. Izu had all this time been sleeping on a hired quilt for which he paid two sen a day. Eiichi now took pity on him and gave him and Sanko three quilts each. This made him short of quilts and in consequence Eiichi had to sleep with the gamin Matsuzo.

CHAPTER XLI

Some Rough Characters



THE drunkards came to make trouble. Yoshida came and Mori, the jinrikisha puller. "Teikoku" also came, and Awa, and Hiyama from across the road. The visits of these drunkards had to be borne with some sort of patience. Mori was always imitating actors and interrupting Eiichi's open-air preaching. In the middle of a sermon he would make his eyeballs go round and round in his head, gesticulate with his hands and speak in a stage voice to make the people laugh. He was always drunk in the daytime, and then about midnight he would set off with his jinrikisha for the vicinity of the Fukuhara brothels. He had no quilts in his small room, but would roll himself up in the jinrikisha blanket to sleep.

When "Teikoku" was drunk he would come to Eiichi's house and talk nonsense. He was a good-natured fellow, however, and never got angry. All he did was to go about repeating "I say . . . I say . . ." When Awa was drunk he would sometimes come with ten sen as an offering to Christ and sometimes with twenty sen. Then again he would sometimes turn up with a demand for thirty or fifty sen. Hiyama, who lived opposite, was a little bad-tempered and was very rough when he was drunk. As for Yoshida next door, he was an impossible man who made the children cry and tore up the floor in his house to burn for firewood. He complained that "the blasted Christians" made such a noise that he could not sleep, and objected to the singing of hymns. As there was only a thin plaster wall between the two houses his anger was not without reason, but when he was sober he said nothing about it and was very polite.

Yoshida had turned out his own "missus," who had gone to live with "Oitabero," but he always regretted it and used to go to "Oitabero's" house and shout insulting remarks. Nobody sympathised with Yoshida, however.

As he did not pay his rent and was always breaking up the house to get firewood, the landlord's wife got angry and came round to see about it, when Yoshida got so violent that he was going to strike her with a board from the floor. Some of Mizuta's gang happened to be passing, however, and they set on to Yoshida with shouts and beat him senseless. Eiichi appealed to Tomita that Yoshida's life should be spared and at last pacified the men, but for four or five days Yoshida was hardly able to eat and not able to get up. He was not a man to profit by experience, however. In a short time he was drunk again and swaggering to Eiichi about his strength.

"Mizuta's got seven or eight hundred in his gang, ain't he, but when I get a bit lively and they get on to me they can't kill me," he said.

One time, in the middle of a service, he rushed in naked and proclaimed that he had become a Christian.

"You said the other day that it don't matter what condition we come in, you know, so I came like this. Ain't it all right?"

"Put something on and come," said Eiichi.

"All right," he replied, and just as Eiichi was thinking how obediently he had gone home, he re-appeared wrapped in a straw mat and sat down quite calmly, causing everybody to laugh,—Deguchi, Ito, Ishino, Ueki and all the women. Yoshida, however, was quite unabashed. For ten minutes he sat there in silence listening to the sermon and then fell into a doze. Eiichi had told them to come in whatever clothes they liked and he felt that he could not very well raise any objection. Finally Yoshida woke up a little sobered and departed with the remark, "I'm going now."

But the men who gave Eiichi the most trouble were Koga and Hamai, who went about begging from foreigners. Koga came of a wealthy family at Kumochi in the suburbs of Kobé and had gone wrong while in the fourth grade of the Middle School. He had learned to gamble, which was the beginning of his downfall, and had joined Mizuta's gang in Shinkawa, thus rapidly sinking to the very bottom. He also became fond of saké and was very rough when he was drunk. He worked among the boatmen at first, but as he had learnt a little English at the Kenki Academy after he had left the Middle School, he became friendly with the foreign sailors who had skipped their

boats and turned beggars, wandering between Osaka and Kobé and spending all the money they begged in drink. Mixing with these men Koga came to the conclusion that a beggar's life was a very romantic one and started imitating them. He pretended that he was a Korean and went about begging at the houses of foreigners.

When Eiichi first moved to the slums in the Christmas of 1909, the first English conversation that he had there was with this man Koga. Koga had read a little of the Bible and used to say, "I know the Bible, you see." It was the fourth or fifth night after Eiichi went to live in the slums that Koga, helplessly drunk, came and was sick over Eiichi's quilt, ending up by sleeping there that night. According to Uchiyama, Koga had such a passion for gambling that he even stole the shutters from his father's house and sold them in the slums. Koga was always coming to ask for loans of ten or fifteen sen. He had a mild disposition, however.

Still worse was Koga's friend Hamai. This man also preyed on foreigners, combining the professions of beggar and bully. In appearance he was very stately. He had bright, almond-shaped eyes, thick eyebrows, and a moustache in the Kaiser's style, very majestic. In height he was about five feet five or six inches and his age was nearly thirty. Altogether he was a very elegant young man. His complexion was a little spoilt, however, by too much indulgence in saké. He had only one kimono even in the coldest weather and was therefore always shivering.

His first remark on meeting Eiichi was made in English.

"Sir," he said, "will you please give me a shirt?"

Eiichi understood English, but as they were both Japanese he finally answered in Japanese, taking care to speak very politely, that the only shirt he had was the one he was wearing and therefore he begged to be excused.

"Give me the shirt which you wear," was the next demand, also in English.

Eiichi took off the shirt in silence and handed it to Hamai, who said "Thank you" and immediately put it on.

Then, still speaking in English, Hamai demanded fifty sen to pay for his lodging. Eiichi said that he had no money, whereupon Hamai accused him of being a hypocrite and a fraud.

"You're defrauding some rich man," he said, and began threatening Eiichi.

As Eiichi still continued silent, Hamai caught him by the throat and commenced shaking and kicking him.

"How can a man sink to such a depth of degradation as this?" thought Eiichi, as the tears rolled down his cheeks. Then the man caught hold of Eiichi's carefully brushed hair, but even at this insult Eiichi was silent.

Uchiyama, however, went out at the back to call Yasu, whereupon Yasu, with his short sword, hastened over. On seeing Yasu, Hamai departed in silence. He had been drinking very deeply on that occasion and his eyes were fixed and his lips blue. Eiichi saw in him a man mad with drink.

But it was not only once or twice that Hamai insulted Eiichi. If he wanted money he came two or three times a day. Eiichi's was not the only place he visited for this purpose apparently. By the side of the slums there was a Kindergarten belonging to the Baptist Mission and to this and to other places he went every day, extorting money by violence. At last the Kindergarten people reported the matter to the police and Hamai was sentenced to two weeks' detention. He was just as bad when he came out, however. From Eiichi and the Kindergarten and from all the cheap lodging-houses he was always extorting money.

Hamai also created disturbances at the open-air meetings. Once, when an open-air meeting was being held just across the Onoé Bridge,—the Christians in the slums and some comrades from the Kwansei Gakuin, altogether eight persons combining to hold a service,—Hamai suddenly appeared and without a word broke up all the lanterns and sprang at Eiichi, striking him three or four times on the face. Eiichi received the blows in silence, but Hayashi, who happened to be passing, forced his way into the centre of the crowd the moment that he saw that Eiichi was being assaulted, and snatching off his right clog struck Hamai on the back. "Don't do that, Hayashi, don't do that," Eiichi called, but Hayashi would not listen and continued to strike Hamai with his clog. A policeman appeared just as Hamai and Hayashi had commenced to grapple with each other. No sympathy was felt for Hamai, and in the end he was taken to the police station.

When the crowd had melted away Eiichi thanked Hayashi and went to the police station to get Hamai released. The police knew Eiichi well, but they refused to release Hamai, on the ground that he was a well-known character who went round blackmailing all the lodging-houses and that the police had long been waiting for an opportunity to catch him in the act. So in the end Hamai had to spend the night at the police station.

When Koga learnt that his friend had been detained by the police he hastened to Eiichi's. Even Koga, however, seemed to have become disgusted with his friend's conduct.

"He's been locked up thirty-two times," he said. "Last year he got into a row in Tokyo. He tried to blackmail some nobleman's family there and when the money wasn't forthcoming he got in a fury and broke up a gold screen that was standing in the entrance. I never saw such a violent chap as he is."

In the papers next morning, in small type, on the third page, there appeared a report about the attack on Eiichi.

CHAPTER 'XLII

The Death of Shibata



ALL the prostitutes became friendly with Eiichi,—one of them even went beyond friendship and fell in love with him. She was a rather pretty girl of twenty-three, named Hidé, who told Eiichi all about herself. This girl had her house in the middle of the next street nearer the sea. She had become the mistress of the brother of young Mizuta's wife, but went out every night as a prostitute. She did not look at all like a prostitute, but had the appearance of a charming maiden.

One day, when Eiichi was passing in front of her house, she called to him.

"Won't you make me your bride, Mr. Niimi," she said boldly, "just for one night even? I've never had a lover like you. You're like a saint, you are, living like you do, and so young too. It's surprising."

"You shouldn't make fools of people like that," said Eiichi, who remained standing in the alley outside her house.

"I mean it really," she said, and she appealed to three other girls, who happened to be there to support her.

Then they all began praising Eiichi. One of them said he was a fine young fellow and another admired his fearlessness when he was beaten by a bully. This led the talk to Hatsu and Osaka's outburst.

"Really Osaka needn't have made such a row," said Hidé sympathetically. "If he'd just said what was the matter the teacher wouldn't have turned him down altogether, would he, but have given him fifty or a hundred. But people don't want to give money to such a rough lot as he is."

Then Hidé began to tell Eiichi how she came to be a prostitute when she was thirteen, and how to work seemed foolish once you have become a prostitute, though she knew that she

ought to repent. She would give it up at once, she said, only she had run into debt and had to keep up her payments to the club, and then she was ill now and then and ran into more debt and so had to keep on being a prostitute or she wouldn't be able to pay everything off.

Eiichi asked how much she was in debt, and she said a hundred and fifty yen. She had had typhoid fever the year before and that was why the debt was so large.

Four or five days after Eiichi saw in the newspaper that Hidé in collusion with a blackguard named Yagi something, had been concerned in the purchase and sale for one yen of a girl of fourteen, whom they had forced to become a prostitute, but that the affair had been discovered and they had both been taken to the police station.

That beautiful girl, Eiichi thought. How horrible! He decided that Hidé belonged to the class of wicked women. Nevertheless he did not think that she had been wicked from her birth. It was the fault of her environment, the debasing effect of the slums.

Another prostitute named Haru, a girl of weak intellect who lived at the Okayama, a cheap lodging-house, where she prostituted herself among the lodgers, also had an inclination for Eiichi. She wrote a scrawl that was meant to be a love letter and after following him about handed it to him herself. Haru was noted in the slums, even among the other prostitutes, for her passionate sensuality, and they used to shout after her in the street. She came in the morning to Eiichi's house and did not want to go away again.

"Teacher," she said, "won't you let me live here? I'll reform and not go on the street any more."

You would not have thought that she was mad at that moment; to Eiichi she showed no trace of sensuality.

In the evenings, at Osaka's house next door, the girls continued to entice the men in, but this did not continue long after the trouble with Osaka. One Saturday evening in March, when Eiichi got back from the office, Uchiyama expressed admiration for Eiichi's extraordinary influence.

"What is it?" asked Eiichi.

"Well, Kiyo, Osaka's daughter next door,—she's been here I don't know how many times with Hanaé, asking for you, be-

cause she said she wouldn't be able to see you again. They kept asking, 'When'll he be back?' I don't know how many times. Osaka told me he was going away to a place north of Osaka because he didn't like Kobé, and it seems he didn't like living next to us since that row. I felt very sorry for Kiyo. 'I won't forget Mr. Niimi and the Lord Jesus all my life,' she says, and she stood there at the door crying half the day."

When he heard this Eiichi was moved to tears. A voice in his bosom whispered that it was a victory for the Gospel. Children easily understand the Gospel of Love and Jesus. How beautiful! She said that she would never forget Jesus and him and wept half the day. He himself wished he could feel such a strong yearning as to make him weep half the day.

Then he thought that she might be still somewhere about, and he looked in next door. But the mats and everything had been taken away and the house was empty.

He asked the eleven-year-old Hanaé in the house on the other side.

"Kiyo cried half the day at the teacher's door," said Hanaé shyly. "She said her father was taking her to Nagatsuka and was going to sell her, and that there wouldn't be any Sunday School there and it would be so lonely and she didn't want to go. She did cry."

"When was she here?" asked Eiichi, but he could only learn that it was a little while ago.

Eiichi wandered here and there through the narrow alleys thinking of Kiyo's soul and of her future. All sorts of unexpected things had happened since he had come to live in the slums and the problems raised had been so perplexing that instead of engaging in the improvement of the slums he feared that he himself was being absorbed into them.

Shibata grew gradually worse and worse. His whole body was in corruption and the offensive odour could be smelt fifty yards away. Eiichi and Uchiyama took it in turns to wash the sick man's linen, which they carried to a ditch in Azumadori early in the morning. In doing this Eiichi was filled with thoughts of the discipline of religion.

Shibata was given up by Dr. Tazawa in the middle of February, but he lingered on, his faith increasing astonishingly every day. Eiichi made no special effort to convert Shibata, for he

thought that it was wrong to force a person's belief. One had only to do one's duty and faith would grow naturally, he thought, and therefore he said nothing to Shibata, but only tended him with a mother's love. As Shibata's illness increased he had a craving for eggs and milk. Eiichi gave him everything he wanted and Uchiyama was moved to the bottom of his heart by Eiichi's action. Uchiyama also sympathised with Shibata from the depth of his heart and tried to do everything he could for him. Shibata's faith grew deeper.

Uchiyama had now become a saint to Eiichi. Two or three months before he had thought Uchiyama a perfect example of an idle fellow, and now that he found Uchiyama doing everything he could to help him, he was astonished. He heard Uchiyama praying repeatedly for Shibata. It was Uchiyama's habit to go into the southwest corner of the room and pray with closed eyes. After that he would go to Shibata and tell him in a simple manner stories from the Gospel of Jesus that he had heard from Eiichi, and Shibata believed all that he was told.

Uchiyama's faith was a very simple one.

"I do feel sorry for Shibata," he would say to Eiichi, "but it was through the mercy of the Lord God in Heaven that he came here and received the salvation of Jesus so that he might by good fortune go to Heaven."

Eiichi was very pleased with Uchiyama's faith.

But God did not listen to the prayers of Eiichi and Uchiyama, and on the 21st of March Shibata sank into the long sleep. It was a death which greatly affected Eiichi.

That morning Eiichi had gone to the office. A little after ten o'clock Ueki came with a message from Uchiyama.

"Shibata's going to his Father's home. Please come at once," was the message, after delivering which Ueki departed.

Eiichi did not catch the meaning of the message. Going to his father's home? Did he mean that Shibata was going to his adopted father's house in Higashidé-machi? Perhaps it was because they had not looked after him properly. That would be very regrettable. But if he tried to walk in his present condition he would certainly fall down on the way. It was very sad that he should have failed to understand all their kindness and should be going to his adopted father's house on the eve of his

death, as probably there would be no one at the lodging-house who would take any interest in him.

Thinking these thoughts Eiichi returned to the slums and found Uchiyama waiting in the alley.

"Master, Shibata's gone to his Father's home at last," said Uchiyama.

Even then Eiichi did not catch the meaning.

"Eh? Gone to his father's house in Higashidé-machi?" he said.

"No, no,—to his Heavenly Father's home. He passed away very peacefully. At the end he asked specially for you. 'Uchiyama,' he says, 'the Heavenly Father's going to take me home,' and he passed away in a kind of doze."

Eiichi's tears fell when he heard this. Deep in his heart he wondered why his faith was not as great as that of Uchiyama and Shibata. He himself had had thoughts of going to Heaven, but till that moment it had not struck him what returning to the Heavenly Father meant. They had not reasoned on the matter. To Uchiyama and Shibata death was a return to the Heavenly Father. What profound faith they had! Shibata had gone before him to his Father's bosom.

Like the Prodigal Son, Shibata had gone home treading in the footsteps of victory. "Amen! Amen!" Eiichi repeated.

The funeral was fixed for five o'clock in the afternoon. The City Hall would have to be notified and Shibata's father in Higashidé-machi must be informed. Eiichi himself went to the City Hall and got Ueki to go to Higashidé-machi. Ueki made himself unexpectedly useful at this time.

It was the first funeral that Eiichi had had from his own house in the slums,—the funeral of the first person who had died in the slums with faith in Jesus, and Eiichi thought at first of having a full length coffin in Christian style. "Fighting Yasu," the head of the undertaker's men, told him, however, that it would cost fifty yen, so he gave up the idea and bought an ordinary Japanese box-coffin.

Although the funeral was not to leave till five in the afternoon, at about three o'clock Shibata's father came, at the head of the members of the second fire-brigade, so they started at four.

Eiichi and Uchiyama performed the last services for the dead man and placed him in his coffin. Yasu and his men arranged the coffin-bearers and all the other details of the funeral.

Before the funeral left Eiichi delivered a very short address. Shibata's adopted father and the men of the fire-brigade, fifteen or sixteen in all, collected in an open space in the yard and listened reverently. The preacher wept from beginning to end of the address. That was because he doubted whether, if his own condition became like that of Shibata's, he would have such great faith as Shibata. As it was his habit to look at everything from the materialistic point of view, he felt that he himself would have died cursing God and man, and he was ashamed of the baseness of his disposition compared with the pious Shibata.

Up to then he had been indifferent to the question of immortality. In reading James's lectures on Pragmatism he had become still more indifferent. He valued the reality of the present moment;—beyond everything he esteemed the religious fervour of the passing moment. Therefore he thought that he would not be frightened, no matter when the wind of death would sweep him away. In September of the preceding year he had had the experience of lying between life and death, but even then he had had no fear of death. He was calm in the face of death. But beyond that absence of the fear of death he could not reach. He could not regard death as a victory, and still less could he reach Shibata's state that crowned itself with the glory of death. In Shibata's case death was the highest art. By means of it he had ascended into the heavens and had easily crossed the frontier of death. When Eiichi witnessed such a solemn death he was struck with admiration. To him such strong faith was worth more than billions of prayers or millions of scriptures, and it made a deep impression on his mind.

He expressed these thoughts in his brief address. The fire-brigade men apparently did not understand in the least what he was talking about. They listened without moving, but their faces showed no emotion. Uchiyama and Ueki wept. "Sanko" Fujita sat idly looking on with his mouth open.

CHAPTER XLIII

Loneliness



AFTER the death of Shibata, Eiichi had a void in his heart. He had a feeling that as Shibata had died so quickly he had been remiss in nursing him, and that therefore he had not attained to perfect love of his fellow-men. He felt very disheartened. The more he came to know the slums,—the more he came to realise the darkness in which the people lived,—the poverty, murders, lawlessness, gambling, prostitution, and unfilial conduct,—all the depressing conditions that existed there,—the more he came to understand why Jesus had died on the Cross. Once you looked earnestly on all the ugliness of this world there was nothing to do but to die. He blamed himself for clinging to life since he lacked the resolution to fight whole-heartedly against the evils in the world.

No one could comfort Eiichi's lonely soul. He had forsaken love, ambition, fame, even knowledge, and had now consecrated himself thoroughly to the service of God. It was not that he was without sexual desires, but they were only momentary. It had been his habit to comfort himself with recollections of Tsuruko and thoughts of Kohidé, but after he had received baptism and had begun preaching strenuously in the open air he had almost forgotten them, and since he had come to live in the slums and entered into the spirit of the Saviour this habit had completely gone. Indecent talk of prostitutes did not affect him in the slightest, and in the circumstances he thought that the wearing of a hair-shirt at night by Sir Thomas More to mortify his sexual desires was rather curious.

Eiichi decided that he would live a holy life. If he was to perform miracles like Jesus he would have to extend a helping hand to all in the slums and cure them all. He thus recognised that it was necessary for him to lead a pure life.

But he felt very lonely. Every Sunday he went up into the

hills. One Sunday, in the hills behind Nunobiki, among the trees by the side of a brook, he spent three hours and a half in reading the whole of the Gospel according to St. Matthew from the first chapter to the last, and in praying continually that he might be enabled to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. On another occasion, at noon, he climbed the summit of a hill opposite to Mount Maya and prayed to God to give him Kobé and the slums. Nature, sleep, and children were his greatest comforters. Throughout his loneliness nothing comforted him more than the two or three bright children—as bright as Kiyô—in the Sunday School, and the increasing interest in the evening services, with Deguchi as the leader. Lately "Fighting Yasu" had taken to coming to the services, and generally there was a congregation of fourteen or fifteen persons. From his street preaching also he drew in two or three persons. The Sunday School had an attendance not short of seventy or eighty and the room became too small to hold them. Eiichi was afraid that the noise made by the children in the Sunday School would prove a great nuisance to the neighbours, especially to Yoshida next door, who not only disliked Christianity, but was also displeased with Eiichi because Eiichi had told him that he should not drink. He therefore never failed to make a disturbance at each meeting.

Great sympathy with Eiichi was felt by Mrs. Mizuta.

"Ain't there no way of reforming a bad man like Yoshida?" she said. "I don't think we should let him live in our houses if he puts ye to such trouble and disturbance."

As Eiichi found his house too small and Yoshida objected to the noise, he proposed that Yoshida should move to an empty house opposite and that he himself should take the house next door, which would be very convenient for him. Mrs. Mizuta immediately agreed and ordered Yoshida to move across the road. Eiichi expected Yoshida to object, but Yoshida agreed to move if his arrears of rent were wiped off, so Eiichi paid the month and a half's rent due from Yoshida and got possession of the house next door. It was in the first part of April that he got possession of the house and he immediately broke down the wall between the two houses and by boarding in the yard made a large room of fifteen by twenty-one feet, which he thought would do very well as the meeting-house of the slums. Now that he had a large house Eiichi was very pleased and the children still more so. Seeing their pleasure delighted Eiichi.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The Stepmother



ON the 5th of April Eiichi received a letter from Awa saying that his stepmother was ill and asking him to go and see her. Eiichi got leave of absence from the office and went off to Itano district for three days. His stepmother was suffering from an attack of rheumatism which had deprived her of the use of her legs, but what distressed Eiichi more than his stepmother's rheumatism, was the total disappearance of the big outhouses and the stable and the storerooms and the big two-storied house. All that was left was the two-roomed house at the back, where his stepmother lived alone. This caused him more distress than anything else. Ties of kinship bound Hisa to the branch family of Tamiya of West Shintaku, the head of which was her younger sister's child and her nephew. She ought really, therefore, to have been taken care of by that family, and there was no obligation on Eiichi to look after his stepmother, to whom he was not related by blood. Her younger sister had died about the time that Eiichi's father had died, however, and there was some attempt on the part of the West Shintaku family to give her the cold shoulder. She had only a small amount of savings to live upon—some said two thousand yen and some three thousand yen—but Ryosuké, her younger sister's husband, had got his eye on the money and wanted Hisa to take the place of her dead sister.

Hisa's sister had been married before and had given birth to two sons. Afterwards she had taken Ryosuké from Myoto, as her second husband, who had thus become stepfather to the eldest son, the head of the house. Also to Ryosuké she had borne four children, and between the first and second families there was constant discord. Then when Hisa's sister had died Ryosuké had gone to live with a widow at Middle Shintaku,

and while he was expecting a child by her, he yet proposed that Hisa should marry him.

Eiichi was surprised to find the same depravity in the country as he found in the slums.

"Ryosuké is certain to victimise me if I live here alone," said his stepmother, "and as I don't mind where I live you'd better take me into your house."

To this petition Eiichi listened sympathetically and told her before he left that if she did not mind living in the slums he would come and fetch her at the end of April or the beginning of May.

When he got back to the slums on the morning of the 8th of April what a sight greeted him! Tomita had brought Kuma's "missus" Toku to sleep with him in the six-mat room, and Kuma, with a drawn sword, had come in to make a disturbance. Toku had just fled by the back entrance, dressed in a faded red petticoat, and Kuma, with the drawn sword in his hand, was asking Uchiyama where she had gone. Kuma did not make any attack on Tomita because he knew that Tomita carried a pistol.

Eiichi had come back earlier than they expected and they were all surprised. Tomita was naturally the most dumb-founded and he could only scratch his head and say he was sorry. Eiichi thought at first that Tomita and Toku were the only intruders, but then he found that there was another girl sleeping there—a girl named Shizu,—and a discharged prisoner named Sawada. Eiichi was taken aback. He asked why Shizu was sleeping there and Uchiyama replied carelessly that it was just to help her. But Sanko was not to be silenced.

"She slept with Uchiyama last night," he said.

Shizu was a girl of seventeen, of a naturally pale complexion which was increased by anæmia, and her disordered hair made her look like a ghost. She was a slovenly girl, and till four days before had been lying suffering from paralysis at the house of a man of ill repute named Yagi Senzo, who acted as pimp for wandering prostitutes. A month or two before that she had been living with a navvy, thirty years older than herself, at a common lodging-house. When she became ill the navvy had turned her out and she had taken refuge in Yagi's house. According to Uchiyama, Yagi had also turned her out, and as she

said that she had no place to sleep except under a bridge, he had taken her in without any idea of doing anything wrong.

Sawada was a man who had been twice sentenced for obtaining goods on false pretences. He said that he was a friend of Kuma, Toku's husband.

Eiichi deplored the defilement of the brotherhood of Jesus that had taken place in his absence, but put it down to his own lack of wisdom. He got rid of Sawada as quickly as possible, but on the other hand made arrangements for keeping Shizu. Thus his "family" was increased to six.

Tomita became desperate and came in the afternoon, very drunk, to pick a quarrel with Eiichi, but Eiichi, to avoid him, went to the seashore to pray. Tomita afterwards, to try his pistol, he said, fired at the wall in Eiichi's house, and Eiichi on returning found many small bullets embedded in the plaster.

CHAPTER XLV

Tsuruko Tamiya



IT was the afternoon of the third Thursday in April. Eiichi had received a message from the Ladies' Society of the Kobé Church, stating that they had collected some old quilts and clogs, bales of charcoal and other things, for the use of the people in the slums, and he had himself taken a handcart and gone to get them. The handcart was quite full. He had descended the slope into Kitanagasa-dori and was going along the road by the side of the railway when all at once he met Tsuruko Tamiya.

She was carrying a parasol and was dressed in a very plain kimono. He himself had on only one tight-sleeved kimono, the skirts of which were girded up, while he pulled the heavily-laden handcart along with difficulty. If he had not spoken, he thought afterwards, Tsuruko would have gone on without recognising him, but he drew the cart close to the fence along the railway line and spoke to her.

"Oh, Mr. Niimi," she said, "what are you doing?"

He replied that he was taking some things that he had received down to the slums.

The day was cloudy and the murky air was more than usually oppressive. Tsuruko herself seemed disconsolate. She was returning from Hiroshima to Awa.

"I could never do that," she said carelessly. She did not show any interest.

"Tsuruko," said Eiichi, making the plunge at once, "how about that question?"

"That question? Oh, my uncle made such a fuss about it that it's impossible in my present circumstances. I don't intend to get married at all. I've changed my mind and decided to get a position at some secluded place."

"Secluded place? Where?"

"As teacher in some elementary school, I'm thinking where I shall go to."

"It's almost two years, isn't it?"

"Yes. You look older."

"Yes, I probably look older still in this garb."

"I heard all about you some time ago from Dr. Williams's wife. It's impossible,—quite impossible."

"Well, I thought I'd ask you again about it. That settles the matter, doesn't it?"

"You hurt me when you talk like that. I don't think I could be so pure as you are."

Tsuruko's eyes were filled with sudden tears and she bit her underlip.

"Well then, Tsuruko, I must be going," said Eiichi, and he grasped the shafts of the handcart.

Tsuruko was all in a flutter.

"Please wait, Mr. Niimi," she said, and she laid one hand on the shafts of the cart. Then she took out her handkerchief and began to wipe her eyes.

"Forgive me," she said, "do forgive me."

An up-train passed along the line, making a tremendous clatter.

"I've got a lot to tell you," went on Tsuruko, "but I can't say it now. . . . Good-bye."

Eiichi's sorrow was aroused in sympathy and his tears fell on the dusty road. But it would never do to allow people to see them weeping in the road, and Eiichi summoned up his courage.

"Good-bye, Tsuruko," he said. "May God guard you and keep you safe."

He commenced dragging the handcart along and had taken one or two steps when Tsuruko, regardless of whether people were looking at her, holding her handkerchief to her face, burst into sobs. Five or six steps more and Tsuruko came running after him.

"Do forgive me," she said, and walked along with him.

"There's nothing to forgive," said Eiichi. "Everything is in God's hands. Follow your own path. My way is to the slums where I mean to live and die. God is keeping watch over us."

They walked together in silence as far as Ikuta-maé. A little farther and Tsuruko spoke.

"I have not the heart to say more now," she said. "I am a stained and worthless creature. Good-bye."

She spoke brokenly.

"Good-bye, Tsuruko," said Eiichi stoutly. "Good-bye for ever."

Tsuruko held back her tears and raised her eyes to meet Eiichi's and as their eyes met there came to Eiichi the feeling of one living in a profound mystery. Tsuruko's beautiful, intelligent face showed signs of sorrow. For three or four seconds they stood gazing at each other and then Tsuruko again cast down her eyes and in silence returned along the road she had come. Eiichi, without a look behind, proceeded with the handcart, but the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

CHAPTER XLVI

Emi's Return



EMI came back suddenly from Formosa. It was on the morning of the 18th of April, a beautiful day, when there came a telephone message from Murai at the Kajiya-cho office asking Eiichi if he would not come round and see her. Eiichi got permission from Kobayashi, the manager, and went round to Kajiya-cho to meet her. It was the third year since they had met and they had so much to tell each other that they did not know where to begin.

"Father has gone," said Emi, and she commenced weeping silently.

"I hear Masunori and Yoshinori have gone to Uncle Yasui's to be taken care of," continued Emi amid her tears, after two or three minutes' silence.

Eiichi had not the heart to talk about it and there was another interval of silence.

"And the big house at West Umazumé has been broken up, I hear," went on Emi.

Emi continued to weep silently and Eiichi joined his tears with hers.

Emi had her hair done in a chignon and looked very young. She was pitifully sallow, like all who live for some time in Formosa. To people in the homeland they look as though their blood had dried up and their faces turned the colour of mud. Emi was not a beauty, but still her face was not ugly and she was not bad to look at, only a little dark-skinned. But the rosy cheeks which she had had when she was sixteen or seventeen,—that is three or four years before,—which, although she was so dark, made her look pretty, had disappeared and her health appeared to have suffered in Formosa, so sallow had she become.

Eiichi could not restrain his tears when he thought of the pitiful lot of his sister whom he loved so much.

Finally he took her back with him to the slums at Fukiai. On the way he asked about her husband and also about the baby she was expecting. She told him very briefly that her husband was thirty years older than herself, that he was a hunchback, and that she had had a miscarriage.

When Eiichi asked why she had come back, she said that her stepmother at Tokushima had written to her asking her to return as she was suffering from rheumatism and had lost the use of her legs, and she had come back to nurse her.

"When do you intend to go back to Formosa?" Eiichi asked, and received the answer that she was not going back. She did not tell him why, saying only that her husband's mother was a very difficult person to live with.

Eiichi had not the heart to press her with further questions and with intervals of silence they walked to the slums. Eiichi had not seen Emi for such a long time that he thought he would like to make a little feast for her, but there was nothing to be got in the slums. When she got into the house there was not even a cushion for her to sit upon. As the big room was not homelike, they went into the six-mat room which was used as a kitchen, in the three-mat room next to which Shizu was sleeping.

It was just twelve o'clock, so the two made a very simple meal together, which seemed to please Emi very much. She said that it seemed to her as if she had come home. This made the tears come into Eiichi's eyes.

After the meal Emi helped Uchiyama to wash up the things, setting to work briskly with the sleeves of her kimono tied up. Eiichi thought it was pleasant to have a sister and rejoiced.

CHAPTER XLVII

Summer in the Slums



EIICHI made a point of going to Bentenhama every Friday at about four o'clock in the morning. This was the place where the lumpers mostly congregated, and Eiichi's object was to propagate the Gospel among them. He thought, in his earnestness to make converts, that there might be some there, even one, who was willing to turn to the life of Christ.

In the dawn of the early summer morning he went to Bentenhama with his dangling paper lantern, marked with the sign of the Cross. Each morning he had a fresh inspiration and felt that he was growing in grace. In the southern sky there hung the Dog Star: it seemed to be twinkling for his sake. He almost thought it was and returned thanks. He felt that it was a pathetic idea, this of his,—to seek to save erring souls. He had not time, like other people in the world, to ask himself whether he was in earnest or not. The world was plainly wandering in a wrong direction. He realised that: he realised it every time he left the slums and every time he entered the slums. He realised painfully what the existence of the slums meant. It was like something boring into his heart; at times it inclined him to burst into sobs.

It was the same feeling that made him get up early in the morning and go among the longshoremen at Bentenhama to preach. To preach Socialism was to frighten people and make them refuse to listen. He therefore decided to do his best, whether he lived or died or went mad, to spread the Gospel of Jesus.

When he got to Bentenhama the dawn was breaking. One of Nickel and Company's foremen came up.

"No one here yet," he said, and then, looking closer at Eiichi, "Oh, it's Mr. Niimi. How zealous you are," he added, and turned round and went away again.

Eiichi stood listlessly on the sea-wall. On the inside of the wall were collected two or three hundred night-soil carts drawn by men and women. The contents were being put one by one into big barges, and the sea round about was contaminated with the filth. An intolerable stench struck his nostrils. He felt pity for the workers. The men and women were extraordinarily silent at their work. They looked like a crowd of ants going backwards and forwards along the gangways. To Eiichi their work appeared sacred.

The boatmen, on the other hand, directly they gathered began to gamble. How much silver was wagered! There were sixty or seventy men gathered round the money they were gambling for.

After Eiichi had distributed tracts among them he sang a hymn in a loud voice, and after that began to preach. As there were many there who had come from the slums of Shinkawa, some of those in the crowd knew Eiichi and listened to him respectfully. But the greater number were indifferent. Eiichi himself was inclined to laugh at his own efforts. Why must he go this length to preach the Gospel of Jesus? He felt sorry for himself.

The refuse boats sailed away. Barges were going out into the harbour, filled with lumpers. The steam hammers at the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Yard began to be noisy, and small launches ran swiftly here and there over the harbour. Great foreign ships were coming in and over the beautiful white-crested waves, smaller vessels were leaving the harbour. The morning sun was now shining brightly over the whole harbour. Light and shade could be clearly distinguished,—even the grain of the wood on the sides of the innumerable boats which crowded Bentenham. Eiichi was distressed when he looked at the brilliant scene to think what small relation there existed between it and the gambling loafers,—between it and the nineteen-hundred-year-old story he was preaching and the gamblers.

The higher the sun rose the darker became the colour of the sea. The sight somehow saddened Eiichi. Trade was dull, and out of the crowd of longshoremen there were many young men for whom there was no employment. Some of these lounged idly on the sea-wall or abandoned themselves again to the gambling craze, but others cried, "Let's go to the pier. Per-

haps somebody will hire us there," and they went off. The voices of the unemployed made Eiichi feel sad.

Generally he followed the men to the big ships to carry on his evangelising work, but that morning he returned direct to the slums, where, in company with his invalids, he supped the rice-gruel prepared by Uchiyama and, without a rest for his tired body, trudged off to the insurance office.

But all Eiichi's efforts to evangelise did not end in failure. There were two or three men among those who worked in the harbour who got into Eiichi's favour, and among them a young man of nineteen, of great promise as he thought, named Soeda. This served to increase Eiichi's zeal, and on Monday evenings he made it a rule to go to the boarding-house of Nickel and Company's men in Nakayamaté-dori, to preach the Gospel, while at the same time keeping up his Friday morning services at Bentenhama.

In the summer months quarrels in the slums increased. In the alley at the back Eiichi heard screams every evening. There were terrible quarrels between husband and wife over the husband's relations with the step-daughter; there were drunken quarrels; there were gambling quarrels between brothers. When there was any attempt at mediation the quarrels would grow fiercer than ever. In the daytime every one went out to work and the place was quiet, but in the evening when they came back there was sure to be a disturbance. The heat of the summer evenings was sufficient to keep one from sleeping, but a far more serious disturbance of rest was the noise made by the fighting.

In summer in the slums it is impossible to sleep. The sun shines on the roofs all day and in the night the heat is radiated from the low ceilings. But worse than that, when the light is put out, there is an endless stream of bedbugs. If the lamp is lit again to catch the bugs, some forty or fifty of them can be caught every night. Eiichi tried sleeping on a shutter, but the bugs got onto that. Then he tried sleeping on the desk, but the bugs got onto that also. They tormented him almost to madness. But Eiichi was not the only one who suffered: all the others in the house suffered from the attacks of the bugs. Emi suffered horribly. When she scratched herself where she had been bitten great swellings appeared. When Uchiyama was

bitten and scratched himself the sores made by the itch from which he was suffering spread and his skin looked as if it had been poisoned. But Sanko was the one most troubled by the bites of the bugs. Frequently he would cry out in the night, "I can't sleep for the bugs." Matsuzo, the mud-lark, and Izu were quite indifferent, and Shizu did not complain. She was afraid that if she made complaints in her helpless condition they would not keep her any more.

Eiichi spent many sleepless nights. His body was so tormented that he seemed on the verge of nervous prostration.

At that time a friend of his, a Dante scholar, named Fumio Tokida, who had been his fellow-student in the Shirokané days but who was now pastor of the Myojo Church at Shitaya in Tokyo, came to visit him. He had come down to get married at Osaka. As Eiichi felt lonely at times he was very glad to talk with Tokida about all that had happened after they had left Shirokané, and as there were three days still before the wedding, they decided that they would enjoy each other's company during that time. At night, when they went to bed, however, Tokida was in agony. He carried the shutter on which he was sleeping first to this place and then to that. The bugs were too thick in one place, he said, and chose another, and all through the night, in the darkness, he was dragging the shutter from one place to another, murmuring in his torment, "I can't sleep. I can't sleep."

But nevertheless Tokida bore it in patience for three days. Then on the evening of the third day, with a very important look on his face, he left the slums attired in a frock-coat for the scene of the wedding ceremony, which was at the North Church at Nakanoshima, Osaka. Eiichi had some business to attend to and was unable to leave the slums till later, but he could hardly help laughing at the wedding ceremony to see the dignified look on the face of Tokida, who the night before had looked anything but dignified when he was being tormented by the bugs.

Eiichi had not the heart, of course, to bring his stepmother to such a place. At the end of May or June he gave up the idea of taking her to live with him as he had promised. He sent her a letter asking her to come at the beginning of the autumn.

In August Shizu recovered to a point where she could walk

by herself, and went back to the lodging-house to live with the docker thirty years older than herself.

In August Eiichi was very busy. He wanted to take all the children in the slums to Suma or Akashi for the day, and for this gathered contributions from sympathisers which enabled him, on the 16th of August, to take eighty children on the outing. It was a very delightful day for Eiichi. Matsuzo, who had greatly improved, was of great help to him in looking after the children, who all of them—Jinko, Toraichi, Hanaé, Kazu and the rest—ran and tumbled about delightedly on the seashore. There was only one thing that troubled him, and that was that the little girls took off their clothes and went in to bathe quite naked. As they did not seem ashamed Eiichi was at a loss what to do.

Infectious diseases were very prevalent in August. There were cases of cholera in the Sakamotoya lodging-house in the same street. Yesterday thirty-six persons had been isolated at Wada Point; to-day the wife of the barber in the alley behind had to be taken to the Higashiyama Infectious Diseases Hospital. Such was the news that he heard every day. But Eiichi did not feel any alarm. Matsuzo Iwanuma's blind mother had been taken to the isolation hospital suffering from cholera, and he went round to visit her. He also went round all the tenements and warned the inmates to be careful. He felt assured that having crossed the death-line he would not catch any infectious disease, and so every day after four o'clock and on Sundays he went to visit the families where such cases had occurred.

It was after the Bon festival that Uchiyama came to him with a request that he would conduct a funeral. It appeared that the husband of a beggar named Tsuta, who lived in the next alley, had died after a long illness and there was no money to bury him. Eiichi willingly undertook the task. He paid for the coffin and himself helped to put the body in it before he conducted the funeral.

Tsuta after that felt great reverence for Uchiyama and came to visit him every day. According to what Uchiyama said, Tsuta had been the beauty of Shinkawa some years ago before she had smallpox. Her beauty had all gone now, however, and she was an ugly woman who got her living chiefly by going out begging every day with two babies hanging round her, one in

front and one behind. She was not a pleasant woman to look at and appeared about forty or fifty years old, but Uchiyama said that she was only twenty-four. However that may be, from the time of the funeral her intimacy with Uchiyama went far beyond friendliness.

Less than two weeks after the funeral of Tsuta's husband Uchiyama came to Eiichi again with a request that he hold another funeral for Tsuta. It was Tsuta's baby that had died. As Eiichi had seen the woman begging at Sannomiya many times with two babies hung round her, he asked which baby had died. Uchiyama explained she had only one baby.

"But she's always been going about with two babies, hasn't she?" said Eiichi.

"It helps beggars to go about like that," said Uchiyama. "They borrows 'em in the neighbourhood."

"So Tsuta had only one baby, had she?"

"Well, to tell the truth, that's a baby she adopted. She adopted it because she wanted some money to get medicine for her husband."

Eiichi then understood. But though he had been living nine months in the slums he had not yet come to understand slum ways and even now he was shocked. But he conducted the funeral of the adopted baby. Returning from the cemetery at Kasugano he found that Tsuta had come with a request that she be admitted into the Christian Church. Eiichi did not understand what her idea was and called Uchiyama.

"It's a lot to ask," said Uchiyama, "but won't you employ Tsuta as a servant? Now she's alone she ain't got anywhere to go."

Eiichi was astonished at the impudence of this demand.

"We can't have a woman in the house," he said. "You took Shizu in before without asking my permission and put me to a lot of trouble, and I won't have Tsuta."

However, on making inquiries Eiichi found that two or three days after the death of her husband Tsuta had begun to go with Uchiyama, and he understood that they wanted to live together. Since when had the dull Uchiyama become so cunning, Eiichi wondered, thinking that the only opportunity they had to consort together was when he was absent at the office.

At first Eiichi thought that there was nothing to be done

but to turn Uchiyama out. Then he recollected what a valuable guide Uchiyama had been to him in the slums. He was inclined to help him, and as he knew that Uchiyama would want forty or fifty yen if he sent him to another house, and Eiichi had not so much money, he lent the couple the room which had been occupied by Shizu. This increased the number of people in the house to seven. He himself, with Matsuzo, Izu and Sanzo, slept in the big room that he had made in the houses next door but one to his own.

CHAPTER XLVIII

Emi's Secret



GAMBLING went on every day in Kitahon-machi, in the middle of the slums, and every day a great crowd of people assembled there. One day, at the end of August, some twenty or thirty policemen in plain clothes were seen loitering about the vicinity of Mizuta's house, and finally young Mizuta and seven other men were caught in the act of gambling and marched off to the police station. After that gambling ceased for a little, but four days had hardly elapsed before it slowly started again on a small piece of vacant ground in the middle of the slums, with a good lookout for the police.

It was not long after this that the elder Mizuta was also arrested while at a gambling party at Nishinomiya. The way the arrest was effected was told by Tomita in detail every time he came to visit Uchiyama. After the arrest of the Mizutas, Tomita's haughtiness and arrogance were extreme and he began to drink to excess, which he had not done before. When he got very drunk he always went round to Eiichi's house, when Hayashi, who had not been there for some time, also came, and, as Tomita and Hayashi were there, Ueki also looked in. Sometimes they took a little nap before going away. Emi, who was shocked in listening to their talk, repeated it all to Eiichi when he came back from the office, and according to her story, Tomita and Kiyokuma Sato, commonly called "Wakayama," a man who kept a common lodging-house in the main street of Kitahon-machi and also lent out money at high interest, were quarrelling over who was to look after Mizuta's family and property during his imprisonment. It seemed that the followers of Wakayama and Tomita would shortly come to blows.

Many years before Wakayama had been one of Mizuta's gang, but had later raised his station in life. Wakayama's feel-

ings of obligation did not go so far as to cause him to send a present to the Mizutas while they were in prison,—in fact, on the excuse that he was following a respectable calling, he did not concern himself at all in the misfortunes that had befallen them. This made Tomita very angry.

Sure enough, on the evening of the 31st of August, there was heard the sound of a pistol being fired at the lodging-house kept by Wakayama, which was called the Wakayamaya, and some seven or eight of Mizuta's followers, with drawn swords, commenced to make a disturbance. In a moment hundreds of people were rushing to the spot with cries of "A fight! A fight!" Mizuta's men were under the leadership of Tomita, and Eiichi, running to the scene on receiving the news, saw that Tomita was helplessly drunk and was flourishing his pistol.

"Wakayama?" he kept crying. "Who's Wakayama? What's he got to be proud about just because he's saved a bit o' money?"

The other men were recklessly cutting to bits the mats, the screens and other things with their blunt swords.

"Wakayama ain't in seemingly," ran the talk in the crowd. "If he were there'd be an awful row. He ain't a chap to give in easily, he ain't."

A man like a detective now appeared on the scene. "Here, less row there," he said, and calmed them down.

When things had grown quieter Eiichi called to Tomita, who was drunker than he had ever seen him before, and with the help of Uchiyama, who happened to arrive on the scene, he led Tomita home. On the way home Tomita was boasting all the way.

"Who's Wakayama?" he kept repeating. "He's no one. He won't feel so proud now. If he'd been at home I'd 'a' beaten him to death."

Although Emi had come Uchiyama still kept the accounts. A strange thing about them was that although the price of rice fluctuated and the quality of the rice was not changed, at the end of the month, when he came to pay the bill, Eiichi found that the price for half a bushel was always the same. As the bill had been the same every month since April, Eiichi asked about it for the first time and received a strange answer from Uchiyama.

"That's because the rice-dealer fixes up the bill by sending

better rice when the price falls and worse rice when it goes up," he said. "He changes it very clever."

Eiichi went to the rice-dealer himself to ask, but the rice-dealer gave him the same answer as Uchiyama. The strange thing about it was that the rice bought that day was entered in the tradesman's book as a little higher than the actual market price. Asking the reason of this, Eiichi was told that the interest for a month was added to the price in the book. This answer did not satisfy Eiichi at all, and on the last day of August, Ueki happening to come in, he explained to Eiichi that Uchiyama, since he had formed relations with Tsuta, had been receiving a commission from the rice-dealer.

Eiichi now understood all and he decided to part with Uchiyama. He gave Uchiyama ten yen, knowing that he must have made twenty yen in commission, and put him into another house, and from that time Emi looked after the accounts. Emi was very glad that she could be of some use to Eiichi, but as she always seemed to be despondent, Eiichi was greatly distressed to know the cause.

One evening in September he asked her about it, but Emi did not make any reply. Then suddenly one day a man called who said he was a Buddhist priest from Formosa. He had a very intimate talk with Emi and in the evening they both went out together. Eiichi thought it was very strange and asked Emi who he was.

This strange priest continued to come every two or three days and each time he came Emi went out with him. In contrast with Emi's youthfulness the priest was a cunning old rogue of thirty-five or -six and had a very artful face. Though he felt it was rather unkind to Emi, Eiichi inquired fully into her relations with the man and Emi at last confessed. Eiichi then learnt that owing to the fact that Emi's husband was a hunchback and unable to have any children, she had entered into relations with the priest and had conceived a child by him which had miscarried in the spring.

"Did you cause the miscarriage?" Eiichi asked.

"No, no, there was nothing of that kind," answered Emi in a choking voice and would answer nothing more.

Beyond this Eiichi felt that he could not carry his questioning. He had great sympathy for Emi and his spirit recoiled as

if the sinner had been himself. He went out into the yard and wept.

Eiichi felt that it would distress Emi unbearably to carry his cross-examination any further and was filled with anxiety. The priest continued to come frequently to see Emi.

At last Emi one day spoke out.

"I am a worthless creature," she said, "and can no longer receive your protection, brother. I am going away."

Her words gave more pain to Eiichi than when he had parted from his father.

There were three more days left in September and the cool autumn winds had begun to blow when Emi, heedless of Eiichi's entreaties, left the house. She did not say where she was going or whether she was going to join the man. All she said was: "Forgive me for the anxiety I have caused you. I am going now, brother. I am too ashamed to stay any longer."

Eiichi was unable to restrain her. If she had said that she was going to commit suicide he would have done something, but when she merely said that she was leaving he could do nothing.

It was after breakfast when she left. There were all sorts of things he wanted to ask about, but she left abruptly, with her handbag, passing westward along the alley and leaving the slums. He would have kept her, he thought, had she had a child's spirit, but she had a woman's spirit and there was no means by which he could restrain her.

"Emi, may God protect you and keep you safe," were the words that rose to his lips.

CHAPTER XLIX

Inari Worship



“**D**O you know that woman’s seen a ghost?”

It was Shin talking to Masa while she attended to the fire under the stove.

Shin was the wife of Renzo Okuyama, who was a scavenger in the employ of the City Hall. She looked about forty-two or -three. Besides having lost the sight of one eye through small-pox, her coarse hair made her very ugly. She was a very capable woman, however. Every day, when she was feeling well, she powdered her pock-marked face, put a small tub on her head filled with syrup, and carrying a small drum in her hand, went to sell the syrup at the cross-roads where the children gather. She was a great gossip and she had got hold of Masa, Fighting Yasu’s wife, to tell her stories about Ju, who was a worshipper of Inari, the goddess of rice, whose messenger is the Fox.*

Eiichi had gone to pay a visit to Shin after coming back from the office, with the intention of talking to her about Christianity. Her house was in the alley behind Eiichi’s, opposite to Fighting Yasu’s.

The autumn sun had not yet ceased shining on the slums and there was some yellow evening light still on the upper part of the houses opposite. Shin’s children were all out playing in the alley. Masa was carrying her latest born on her back and had some pickled radishes, wrapped up in a piece of old newspaper, in her hand. She greeted Eiichi, who was sitting in Shin’s house, and Shin, who was looking after the stove, detained her with all sorts of talk till at last the conversation got round to religion and Shin began to talk about a woman named Ju, with whom she was well acquainted. This woman was the wife of a barber living in the same alley and was a worshipper of Inari. Shin wanted to let Eiichi know everything that she knew about

* The ignorant, however, confuse the fox with the goddess and worship the fox.

Ju, but addressed her conversation to Masa, who was leaning against the door-post with her eyes fixed on the well opposite.

"Yes, yes, she's very strange," chimed in Masa.

Shin took some live coal out of the stove on a shovel and put it into a dirty brazier, filled with burnt matches and tobacco-ends, in the front room.

"Ah, but she's so highly strung, she'd see anything. Why, she must be eleven or twelve years older than Shigezo."

Eiichi knew Ju well. She annoyed all the neighbours every night by reciting prayers and beating a drum.

Shin, still continuing to chatter, brought out a pipe and commenced to smoke, while Masa loitered over to the brazier and sat down by the side of Eiichi.

"Yes, she's too high-spirited, she is," said Masa. "The sight of her quarrelling with her husband every night ain't nice, is it? She don't think it right unless she takes Shigé with her wherever she goes. They quarrels every evening out of jealousy."

Shin sent the smoke out through her nose. "Um," she said. "That's her high spirits. She's changed her husband five times. Ain't it extraordinary?"

Eiichi gazed at the red and yellow match labels stuck on the walls and listened in silence to their talk.

"Really? Has she had five of 'em?"

"Didn't you know? And you so intimate with her too. She had a baby when she was sixteen by some man south of Osaka, and the first time she got married she had two girls. That's one of 'em,—the girl that comes here so often. She's a waitress or something somewhere they say. She's the youngest of the two."

Eiichi noticed that Shin was tattooed on the upper part of her arm. Masa had become absorbed in the story.

"Yes, yes," she said, "she's tall and got a round face and looks rather pretty."

"Yes," went on Shin, "that's one of the children by her first husband. Her sister's in Yokohama, I hear, in a brothel or something. However, that husband, either he took another woman or something else happened, at any rate she was turned out or went out of her own accord, and the next time she became the wife of a man whose wife had died, and it was in his house that she saw the ghost."

"Yes?" said Masa. "Was it after the second marriage that she saw the ghost?"

Eiichi, who found the story interesting, was drawn into the conversation.

"Did that woman who worships Inari really say she saw a ghost?" he asked.

A boy of twelve or thirteen came in with a baby which was crying to be fed. Shin took the baby and while she was feeding it went on with her interesting story in a loud voice. The rice was beginning to boil over, but she took no notice of it.

"They say that when the first wife was dying she called her husband and told him that she was dying, but that he mustn't take another wife. Then she made her will and died. But the husband, he didn't pay any attention to what she said, but took Ju. Well, seven days after the marriage, every night, the ghost of the first wife used to come to her in a dream."

As the pot was now boiling very furiously Shin, still holding the baby, went to the stove and commenced to take out some of the fire, while continuing her story.

"They say that after that she became like one mad. In the middle of the day she would cry out 'The ghost!' and run out into the street. The other people in the house, they thought it was very strange and that the first wife couldn't have reached Paradise, so they collected all their relations and all the people in the neighbourhood to say a prayer ten thousand times, and while they were saying the prayer in front of the shrine, about the middle of the night, suddenly Ju gave a groan and fainted outright. There was a terrible scene. They called the doctor and a nurse, and at last she came round so that she could speak. 'The ghost came out of the shrine,' she says, 'and kicked me,' she says, 'and then disappeared.' That's what she says. But in spite of that she soon left the place. As she'll tell you herself, she became the mistress of a priest."

"Was it after that she went to live with Shigé?" asked Masa.

"She couldn't bear to be mistress of the priest for long, and it was three and a half years ago that she went to live with the barber."

Eiichi felt as if he were listening to the talk of the woman of Samaria, so interesting was it, although such stories as this are by no means rare in the slums. But there was a reason for

Eiichi's taking a special interest in the story and this was that Ju's present husband, a young man named Shigezo Motoki—only twenty-two, but looking very much older owing to his having had smallpox—had come to him in regard to the legal procedure for registering a child that had been born to them, and had told Eiichi that he was drawn toward Christianity and was prepared to be a convert, but that his wife, being taken up with the worship of Inari and Fudo, would not allow him to become a Christian. This statement still lingered in Eiichi's memory.

Shin and Ju had both fallen down to slum life together and had become like sisters by sucking each other's blood. They and five or six women companions who came from Azuma-dori, had all tattooed themselves on the right arm in the same place and in the same way, and used to meet together to drink and gamble. Eiichi had noticed before that Shin had the character for "strength" tattooed on her arm. Eiichi had also heard from Shin of the people in the neighbourhood who had shot the moon. She passed as a woman of character and was a little proud of knowing the histories of all the families in the neighbourhood.

"I'm going home," said Masa. "I've got to make supper. We've had a good talk."

But after she had gone Shin continued talking for a long time about the histories of all the folks in the neighbourhood,—about how Mizuta, who was now rich and powerful, had started from nothing, his wife being only a prostitute, and how all the landlords in the place mostly came from the pariah villages and were beggars when they started;—how Tada, who had been a beggar, was now a usurer, and so from the landlords of the slums to others,—a winding stream of gossip, ending in the remark that as the landlords had so much money they ought to help the poor.

Eiichi heard enough of the gossip of the slums to have enabled him to collect the material for a romance, and after that, whenever he wished to hear the history of the slums, he always went to Shin's house.

On becoming more intimate with Shin he found that she was a very capable woman and could be relied upon for many things. If Fighting Yasu came to make a disturbance the person who could take him home was Shin. But on the other hand, she could also be very troublesome. She was behind with her club money

and came to Eiichi to borrow it. Then again, she knew an old couple that were in want and appealed to Eiichi. Again, as her husband's work as a scavenger was not to his liking, she said that she wished to buy an outfit for pipe-mending and would Eiichi lend her four or five yen. Eiichi granted all her requests.

Shin brought the old couple, whose name was Kishimoto, and they were allowed to live in the meeting-house. Shin, to show her gratitude, said that she wanted to become a Christian.

"I don't know anything about it," she said, "but it must be good because it teaches people to be kind."

So she came to the services and brought with her Shigezo Motoki, the barber, and the small congregation became a large one. The barber was able to read Japanese letters freely, and set to work with great energy and curiosity to read the New Testament.

He told Eiichi about the things that astonished him.

"What amazes me first," he said, "is that Mary should have conceived a child by the power of God when she had no husband. But the almighty God must certainly have that power. Ju, at home, she's always jawing about it,—how when she's filled with religious fervour a woman can get a child without a man. Her third son,—the one that died when he was four, she says,—was born when she was filled with piety, she says, and according to her it was born without her knowing a man. I thought it was all stories, but according to Matthew's Gospel, a child can certainly be conceived without intercourse with a man. The cases of Mary and Ju somehow make me think it must be true. Then what amazes me next is that Jesus could bring the dead to life and cure the sick just by putting his hands on 'em. My wife has cured lots of sick people by praying continually, and if that's so in one case it's so in the other. Sickness is a disease of the soul and if you pray strong enough you're bound to cure it. Then there's another thing, and that is that when Jesus was crucified he died but came back to life again. If he couldn't do that he wouldn't be God. But, teacher, what come out o' the tomb wasn't his ghost, was it? Speaking of ghosts, Ju at home, she's seen a ghost. Howsoever, this Jesus was certainly a remarkable person."

This was the way in which he rearranged the life of Jesus, causing Eiichi much perplexity. Although the barber readily accepted the doctrine of miracles, Shin, who had not learnt her

letters and was unable to read the Bible, objected that she could not believe in a God that you could not see.

"When you're praying you shut your eyes, don't you?" she said. "And then in the darkness there appears a little shining cloud and in the middle of that there's something like the god Amida. That's God, ain't it? I must have a god I can see."

Eiichi had to explain the Gospel of Jesus to all these questioners, and he thought at last that he would like to meet this Ju who had made such a remarkable impression on the barber.

Ju's meeting-house was much grander than Eiichi's. It was a five-mat room in a tenement house in the alley at the back of Eiichi's, where some thirty-five men and women, old and young, assembled and worshipped Tensho Kodai Jingu by repeating in a loud voice the prayer "Namu myoho rengé kyo" (Save us through the Scripture of the Lotus of the True Law), beating time with clappers and a drum.

It was the evening of the 1st of October when Eiichi went to see the proceedings, and he was surprised to see Shigezo, Ju's husband, who at the Christian Church was always praying to the Heavenly Father, beating the drum, while Shin was working the clappers. Next to the barber, also, were seated the aged couple from next door, and the blind masseur was among the crowd. There was also the daughter of Tané, the usurer,—the girl who had borne a baby secretly the other day and had done it to death.

It was a very tedious service. For ten to twenty minutes they did nothing but repeat "Namu myoho rengé kyo" while beating the drum and striking the clappers. Eiichi looked on with patience, however, till at last the noise of the clappers ceased, the drum was silent and the cry of the worshippers grew lower. Then Ju, with her palms pressed together, lifted up her hands and waved them in the air while she cried repeatedly in a low voice "Namu, Arakuma Daimyojin" (Save us, Arakuma Daimyojin). All present, with a fearful look in their eyes, fixed their attention on Ju.

Suddenly Ju rose to her feet, all her body quivering.

"I am the Fox of the Myoken Shrine at Nosé," she cried. "Ask me what ye will. I know everything."

This was the first time in his life that Eiichi had seen what is called the invocation of Inari, and there was something weird and at the same time something ridiculous about the ceremony

which made him want to burst out laughing. Nevertheless he stood in the shadow of the door and watched. The evening sun had now set and the alley was silent. The shrine was a small dirty cupboard of six feet by three, with two thick candles burning on it very majestically.

Seeing Eiichi standing there five or six persons passing along the alley also stopped and gazed earnestly.

Ju, having proclaimed herself the Fox of Nosé, the blind masseur and Shin and Shigezo expressed their acknowledgments.

"The Fox of Nosé has come," they said. "What an honour!"

"We'll know everything to-day," said Asa, the beggar.

"Fox of Nosé," said the blind masseur, "I have a question to ask you. How old are you?"

Eiichi thought it was a very stupid question, but Ju, as the Fox, answered earnestly, "I am nine hundred and seventy-five years old."

"Really?" said the blind masseur. "I would ask another question. I suffer from rheumatism. Can you cure me?"

"Certainly," said the Fox. "Come here. If I touch you, you will soon be better."

She stroked the blind masseur from the shoulders down to the loins.

The scene was an extraordinary one to Eiichi;—Ju, dressed in a dirty kimono, narrow girdle and light-blue apron, stood in a trance with her eyes shut and a frown on her pale face. Patient after patient came forward to be treated by the Fox. After some five or six had been stroked, conversation between them and the Fox began again. It was the daughter of the money-lender who asked a question.

"Has my child reached Paradise yet?" she asked.

"No," was the reply. "It has not reached Paradise yet. It is still wandering in the sixth circle."

Hearing this the daughter of Tané fell down in a fit of weeping. Shin consoled her.

"Don't cry, Yaé," she said. "It can't be helped."

Asa, the beggar, asked about her sick husband.

"Lord Fox," she said, "the sick man at home will get better, won't he?"

Asa's husband, who was also a beggar, was suffering from inflammation of the bowels.

"No," was the answer, "there is no hope of his recovery."

"Isn't there?" said Asa with a sigh. The lights on the shrine flickered.

It seemed as if the questions were at an end as everybody was silent for two or three minutes. Then Shin spoke.

"Lord Fox," she said, "we thank you," and two or three repeated after her, "We thank you."

Then Ju began to quiver and sinking down she fell forward. Again there was silence for five or six minutes, during which time a crowd of children came running along the alley to see the sight. "The Fox! The Fox!" they cried. Among them were Jinko and Toraichi and Kumazo and the three children of Fighting Yasu.

Shin called to them from inside.

"Here, you be quiet, Kuma," she called. "Don't make such a noise."

Ju was silent while the children peered at her with curious eyes.

At last Ju sat up.

"I must thank you all for your attention," she said, as she arranged her hair.

In reply they expressed their thanks to her.

"Ju, didn't it make you feel tired?" said Shin, while she took one of the children on to her lap. It was a question which exposed the truth.

"What do you mean?" said Ju. "I don't know anything that happened."

"Is that really so?" said Asa admiringly.

"The Fox has gone! The Fox has gone!" cried the children. "Let's go," and they all rushed along the alley again.

Eiichi also went along the alley, his mind filled with thoughts of what he had seen. He met Shin's husband dragging his pretty little pipe-mending cart along the alley.

The worship of Inari spread. Up to then the sound of the clappers and the voice of the worshippers had not been heard, but now in the house of the money-lender at the back of Eiichi's, the sound of the drum was heard in competition with that at the barber's. Tané, the money-lender, became anxious, because two or three days before Inari had been invoked in her house. Inari had also been invoked by the wife of the carter who lived

opposite to Eiichi's big room, and the husband was anxious. His wife had bought a beautiful Inari shrine and had hung up twenty or thirty tiny lanterns at the entrance to celebrate the occasion, but as she invoked Inari every morning and did not look after the baby, and was always saying strange things, her husband had grown angry and had broken into pieces the shrine that was not yet ten days old and burnt it in the alley.

Eiichi did not know till then that the woman opposite was so taken with the worship of Inari, for she always stopped quietly at home and he never heard the sound of a drum or clappers. But when he learnt the circumstances he listened with a good deal of sympathy to the husband's tale.

"Four or five years ago I had great trouble with this invocation of Inari and after I had burnt up the shrine I had to move 'cause my wife got so hysterical. For four or five years I heard no more about Inari, but lately there's been a beating o' drums in the neighbourhood, you know, and the other day she saw a fox or a badger possess the wife of the barber at the back here, and since then she's been doing nothing but saying strange things. Her Fox comes from Tsutsui, she says, and she's so worn out I don't know what to do. She just loiters round all day and don't do nothing."

The Inari shrine had been burnt and the wife came out with an unconcerned air.

"There, I've burnt up the shrine," said the husband, "and the fox must go away."

The wife laughed, but said nothing. She was a tall woman of about thirty, with her face covered with moles. She was a very obedient wife,—rare in the slums.

"Christianity's the best after all," said the husband to Eiichi. "There ain't no fox to come."

The travels of Inari were not confined to the slums of Kitahon-machi. The drum could be heard in Azuma-dori and in Higurashi-dori. Inari worship is a strange thing. According to the newspapers the police were also inquiring into it. In more than fifty cases, it was written, fines had been inflicted. At the pariah village of Tsutsui, before a tenement house in the main street, there was a large Inari shrine, with red pillars in front of it. Eiichi was astonished at the revival of the worship of Inari.

CHAPTER L

Some Converts



ALTHOUGH Eiichi lived in the slums he was not always in such mental distress as might be expected and at times made a study of the lazy people that he met, or, standing in front of the clog-mender's, investigated the philosophy of clogs. Or again, walking round the tenement houses, with their two-mat rooms, he thought of Diogenes and the Cynics.

Before he had been a year in the slums Eiichi had come to have a full knowledge of the mental outlook of the people there and had prepared a list of lazy people which ran to eighty names of men and women, beginning with Sakurai. The degree of laziness, the occupation of the family, the cause of the laziness, age and health,—all were set down.

Further on in the same note-book was a section headed "The Philosophy of Old Clogs," with remarks like this:—

"Men's clogs are nine and a half inches long and women's clogs eight and a quarter, but when they are first turned out of the log they are half an inch longer. The legs of fine-weather clogs are one and a half inches high and the front hole is bored about three-quarters of an inch from the edge. The clogs themselves are half an inch deep at the sides, but in the middle they are about three and three-quarter inches to four. The wider the wood the better. The high clogs for bad weather have legs about a fifth of an inch or a little over in thickness and the Japanese stand on these thin legs. The height of the legs in high clogs is about three inches and a quarter for women and about three inches and a half for men. Japanese on their high clogs pretend to be exalted, but their only superiority is that they are three and a half inches above the ground."

Again, Eiichi was an admirer of life in a two-mat room. It was not necessary for bachelors to live in a room larger than two mats, he thought. For himself he liked nothing better than to

go and enjoy himself in the two-mat room of the old woman called "Neko." There was certainly no inconvenience in seven or eight persons sleeping in three five-mat rooms.

Life in the slums was satisfying, but nevertheless, coming back from Moto-machi in the evening, Eiichi was always inclined to be sick when he entered the slums, and felt miserable. But life in the slums was Eiichi's mission and he could not feel any aversion to it. He never had time to feel lonely. There was always something happening. He was so busy that he forgot all his reflections and meditations. Moreover, there was too much wretchedness in his surroundings for him to be able to afford time for thinking. Nevertheless, if there was any laughable incident, they were all sure to laugh. Since he had gone to live in the slums, Eiichi had been able to understand for the first time the function of laughter. Laughter was the precious safety-valve provided by God. Even in the most unbearably hard and tearful times they tried to laugh as much as possible and Eiichi had learnt to laugh with them.

Among those living in two-mat rooms, the one who laughed most was Haru, the beggar. She was the mistress of the tinman opposite, while still continuing to beg, and was very stout, without any of the marks of a beggar. She was always laughing.

"What's the use of crying, teacher," she used to say. "Teacher's always smiling, and if one's got to spend one's life either crying or laughing, it's better to spend it laughing, ain't it? Luck visits those who laugh, you know, teacher," and she laughed.

To those in good health there are plenty of amusing things in the slums. Eiichi was astonished at the laughter of the people, which he had not expected. In contrast to the wry faces among the people in the middle classes, the people in the slums are unexpectedly cheerful. Intimacy with them is therefore very easy.

Eiichi made many friends, but he found it difficult to get on terms of intimacy with the family of Hanaé, who lived in the house between the two houses he occupied. He heard that the family was in very miserable plight, although he had not known it till then. Lately there had been a good deal of quarrelling between the brothers and sisters, and he knew that some bad influence had entered into the house.

Hanaé had two elder brothers and two elder sisters. Her eldest brother had become an actor and had gone to Osaka and not returned. The next brother, who was nineteen years old that year, was working at the match factory. Her eldest sister, who was a one-eyed woman of thirty-one or -two, was a very unlucky person. She had married the son of a keeper of a common lodging-house, but he had been attacked by consumption and had been laid up for many years in a room in the lodging-house. She had therefore also to work at the match factory to support her husband and had there sustained phosphorus poisoning, so that her jaw had inflamed and all her front teeth had dropped out. By her consumptive husband she had had a child who was now six years old, and who was not only a cripple but blind. His blindness was due to some poison that entered his eyes at birth, and he had become a cripple when his nurse had let him fall. Moreover, the child was both deaf and dumb and altogether a very pitiful object. Hanaé had to carry him about on her back all day.

The second sister was rather a pretty girl. A man named Tsuchiya, who was not quite right in his mind, was in love with her, but the mother,—a fine-looking woman, formerly the wife of a samurai of Koriyama in Yamato,—and the younger brother Katsunosuké were strongly opposed to her having any relations with him. That was the reason why the brother and sister had come into collision.

Whenever Eiichi saw Hanaé carrying Hidé on her back he felt as if he were in hell. The child had got into the habit of sleeping all day and crying loudly all night. This would not have been so bad if it had only been for one or two nights, but it went on for months at a time, causing the whole family to complain that they could not sleep. It was not uncommon to hear Katsunosuké, in the middle of the night, telling his sister that it would be better to kill the child and threatening to kill it if it did not keep quiet, to which his sister would reply, "Yes, Katsu, I've often wanted to kill the child myself, but then you know, it's because of some ill deed done in a past life that it's like this, and so we must be patient."

She was certainly an extraordinary woman. She had been married exactly ten years and her husband had been laid up with consumption for eight or nine years, during which time she had

not only nursed him, but had also supported her crippled child. She was a silent woman, but each time that Eiichi saw her he was struck beyond words by the sublimity of her character.

Somehow the whole family had an aversion to Christianity. Although Hanaé came to see Eiichi every day, the mother never came. On the other hand Eiichi often went to see them and inquired into their circumstances.

At last, at the beginning of October, the elder sister's consumptive husband died, and no sooner was the funeral over than the elder sister and her crippled child fell ill. According to the doctor they were both suffering from consumption. While the mother and child were lying ill some talk was started at the lodging-house of getting the mother's name struck off the family register, and as it was impossible for a young man of nineteen and his young sister, who only earned thirty sen a day, to support a family of six persons, they were all thrown into great trouble. After the lapse of five days they came to Eiichi and asked him if he would provide them with money just to buy medicine. It was Katsunosuké who was the messenger, and he spoke as if he were talking to a familiar, unceremonious and curt.

"You'll excuse me, sir," he said, "but sister's bad with her lungs and asks whether you'll give us some money for medicine."

Eiichi willingly granted the request and said that he would send Dr. Maeda of Yakumo-dori.

But the patients grew worse day after day and the doctor decided that there was no hope. The family did not seem to be much concerned at the news;—at least, Katsunosuké said that it would be a relief.

"If they've got to die," he said, "it's better they should die soon, 'cause otherwise we'll all die of starvation."

This was not Katsunosuké's view alone; it was that of the mother and Hanaé and all of them. It must not be thought, however, that they in any way neglected the patients. They paid them every attention. Their desperation arose from the difficulties of their position.

Eiichi comforted them as best he could and gave the mother many gifts of money in order that she might nurse the patients properly. The sick daughter, when she heard of this, was moved to tears, but she did not say a word to Eiichi. Eiichi was

especially interested in them because they were suffering from consumption.

They were not ill very long. After seven days they fell into a critical state, and on the morning of the fourteenth day, about four o'clock, the mother died. Of course there was no money for the funeral and Eiichi provided eight yen.

The child, however, lived a comparatively long time. Every day Hanaé had to carry the half-dead, deformed child on her back, where, in its agony, it would seize and pluck out the stray hairs on the back of Hanaé's neck.

Eiichi did all he could to comfort the family and they in turn relied on him more than on a relative, so close was the intimacy. Katsunosuké, especially, came to visit Eiichi nearly every evening, and finally took part in the open-air meetings.

CHAPTER LI

Kohidé



ABOUT this time many young men began to gather at Eiichi's place. Among the first was Takeda, a very virtuous young man. He first came at the time of the early summer rains. Then there was a fortune-teller,—a man of about fifty, with a fine moustache,—who came late at night with the request that Eiichi would teach his children Christianity. This fortune-teller was a very eccentric person. He practised fortune-telling at Shinkaiichi and was always on the lookout for persons suffering from some mental distress.

"If you want to be cured of your trouble," he would tell them, "you must go to the crossing below here and then turn to the right, and then five or six houses along you will find a Christian mission hall. That's where you must go."

His younger sister was a Christian and he himself had made a deep study of Christianity and was a believer. He was especially of the opinion that the young of the present day needed the inspiration of Jesus in their careers. He told this to every one. It appeared that he had not been successful in leading his own children to Christianity and he earnestly made the request that Eiichi would instruct the young people in the Bible.

Eiichi devoted what leisure he had to spare after his return from the office to talking about Christianity to a number of young people who had established a very small factory, in co-operation, for the manufacture of shell buttons, at Higurashidori, outside the slums.

Takeda and his friend Yamamoto were the leaders and the workers numbered nine, including Inoué, Motoyama, Kubo, Sasai, Enomoto, Asai and the young brother of Takeda. The majority were about eighteen or nineteen years old, but Inoué and Enomoto were only about fourteen or fifteen. When Eiichi

went to see them they were covered with white powder from the shells they were making into buttons, even to their faces, and as they were incessantly talking and laughing they paid little attention to the talk about Christianity. However, after Eiichi had been two or three times he got them to sing one or two hymns, although he could not create enough interest among them to get them to come to the services in the slums.

At the beginning of autumn, however, Takeda came to see Eiichi at last. He came to listen to the sermon in his workman's coat with his hair cropped short,—fat little Takeda. He had been to a Sunday School when he was a little boy and knew much about Christianity.

Although Takeda came the other young men did not put in an appearance till they heard that Katsu, Hanaé's elder brother, was attending, when two or three of them came. Thus the small meeting-house, which up to then had only been frequented by old ragpickers who could not read the Scriptures, suddenly became very animated, to Eiichi's extreme delight.

On the evening of the 18th of October, moreover, Eiichi made a convert at his open-air meeting. This was a bean-curd seller who, by heavy drinking and profligacy, had lost all confidence and was on the verge of committing suicide. He commenced coming to the services, which, in consequence, suddenly grew very lively.

The name of the bean-curd seller was Yosagoro Machida. He had himself made eight armed attacks on other people and had been attacked by others thirteen times, with the result that one of his eyes had been gouged out. He had changed his wife seven times and his business he did not know how many times, so that he was well acquainted with all the ups and downs of life. He was a very amusing and ready speaker and the day after his conversion he gave an address at the open-air meeting which was so interesting that the audience demanded more. He also appealed to the young people, who were very fond of him and eagerly listened to his reminiscences and to his attacks on society. He had some experience of speculation and he was especially clever in describing the mood of the speculator. Whenever he finished speaking there was certain to be a group gathered round him to gossip.

The gatherings of the young men in the slums brought an-

other matter to Eiichi's attention, and that was the Labour question, which greatly exercised them. All the young men who met at Eiichi's place knew very well what was the condition of the factories in the neighbourhood. Katsunosuké was employed in the match factory. Motoyama, who came with Takeda, was engaged in the manufacture of shell buttons, but up to only two or three months before he had been working with the Pacific Rubber Company. Asada had been in the employ of the Premier Cycle Company and knew the conditions there. The talk about the match company and the rubber company showed that the worst conditions prevailed there, but nevertheless crowds of more than fifty or sixty men assembled in front of the Pacific Rubber Company every morning, seeking employment, and even when there was only one man wanted the crowd often reached to nearly a hundred.

After all the trouble taken to get employment there, however, two days' work saw them at the end of their endurance, and as most of them were unable to stand a week of it they were made to sign an agreement on entering that if they left before the end of a week they would lose their pay.

Eiichi felt that, however much assistance he gave to the people in the slums, unless he was able to secure a radical change in their treatment his efforts were useless, and he took great pains to ascertain what was the best course to take. Among the young men he laid emphasis on the importance of forming Labour Unions, but there were no facilities for forming Labour Unions and time passed and nothing was done.

Meanwhile many people continued to come to Eiichi for assistance. Among them was a man with a fine beard who passed as a priest and went round the streets begging alms. He knew Uchiyama very well and joined the Christian community, while spending his days in making ear-picks. He was known in the slums as "Higé." He brought a friend with him,—a gardener named Toda,—to join the church. This gardener, who had four children, had once been a builder's assistant, but had become a gardener through love of gardening. In the summer he went to gather herbs on the hills and sold them at the night-fair at Sannomiya Shrine.

At the end of October, as trade was dull, there were many applications to Eiichi for assistance, and among them was a man

known as "Ukarebushi" Ichiko. This man had killed his wife by striking her with a wooden pillow. He was a round fat man of a sallow complexion. He came to Eiichi because he was suffering from syphilitic rheumatism and could not work. Eiichi took him in.

In the same way, at the end of October, a man came to Eiichi for assistance as he had no work and was in need of money. He said that he was the son of a brothel-keeper at Nagasaki and that he had been a teacher of fencing and also a policeman. Then a week later a tall man named Hida, some six feet in height, who had received a communication from Yanasé, the son of the brothel-keeper, came and asked Eiichi for assistance. He said that he had been a policeman in Formosa. Thus the family increased to ten,—Eiichi, the old couple named Kishimoto, Matsuzo, Izu, Sanko, Higé, "Ukarebushi" Ichiko, and the two policemen.

Fastidious old Kishimoto got up every morning at four o'clock to cook the rice, going back to bed again at five to wait for the others to get up. He had a passion for cleaning and was forever sweeping the entrance. Of course he kept the inside of the house neat too, but to sweep the mud off the door-step was his special craze, and he would do it three or four times a day, until it became a legend in the neighbourhood.

Matsuzo went to the elementary school. As he was the biggest in the class he was the leader in all sorts of mischief and was often kept in by his teacher. He was often marched off to the police station also. On all these occasions Eiichi used to scold him in a loud voice. Eiichi only spoke in a loud voice when he was preaching and when he was scolding Matsuzo, old Mrs. Kishimoto used to say. Matsuzo would not have thought he was being scolded unless the scolding was done in a loud voice—(people in the slums always speak loudly)—and Eiichi intentionally scolded loudly, even to straining his voice. Matsuzo himself once said to Eiichi that he was not afraid of Eiichi's scolding, but he was afraid of Eiichi's loud voice.

The two policemen got employment at the Premier Works in polishing bicycle rims.

Eiichi had now become accustomed to life in the slums. He even began to feel that he was growing unmannerly. In calling Matsuzo he just shouted "Matsu," and when he was scolding

"Ukarebushi" Ichiko, instead of using the polite form, he just shouted "Ichi," quite unconcernedly. Eiichi was alarmed and was seized with contempt for himself that he should become so proud just because he was the most learned man in the slums and had money and was looked up to. He felt that the longer he lived in the slums the more he would suffer from nervous debility and the more conceited he would become. But as he could not take any holiday he did not know what to do. He knew that one reason was that he had so much to do that his mind was never at rest. In the slums he was never able to arrange his time. If he had anything to do he wanted to do it at once. He must become a man with nothing to do.

Everybody in the slums,—all the young people who had joined his church,—wanted to talk with him, and if Eiichi had yielded to them he would have had no time for reading or thinking. He had to excuse himself unwillingly, therefore, whereupon they said that he was like a foreigner. He thus began to feel that he was somehow isolated.

In whatever they do the people at Shinkawa are very leisurely. They would talk to Eiichi for one or two hours at a time, repeating the same thing over and over again. Eiichi would hear the gist of their story and tell them he understood, but this did not satisfy them. It only made them grumble about the teacher being in such a hurry. Eiichi felt that he must give up reading and all nourishment for his mind, and was troubled.

Eiichi had now forgotten all about love for nearly a year. One reason was that he had no opportunity of meeting any pretty women, and another was his private belief that it would prevent his performing miracles. He had become an ascetic for the purpose of developing the power of performing miracles. His flow of energy was wonderful even to himself. He was astonished that he could display so much energy considering that he was a vegetarian.

Sometimes he felt rather proud of his self-control, but at other times he felt that his passions were withered and that he had become inanimate. He had forgotten all the past. He thought that he was as translucent as a silkworm. He was like a mountain hermit who had descended on the slums. He even came to the point of wondering whether, if circumstances compelled him, he could not utilise the art of making oneself invisible in broad

daylight and so ascend to heaven. But then he thought that he did not want to make a daylight ascension. Of course he was no longer afraid of death. He had almost come to believe that his body was sword-proof. Whenever there was a quarrel he rushed to the scene to act as mediator, and no matter how violent the quarrel was, whenever he appeared on the scene they all ceased quarrelling out of respect for him.

It was about this time that Shinoda suddenly came to visit him and, with all his old swagger, said that he had come to take Eiichi to the Higashi Tokiwa, the well-known restaurant at Suwayama, to give him a treat. As Eiichi was longing for some sort of change he went with Shinoda.

Shinoda told him that as he had received great favours from Eiichi in the past, and as he had been successful in a plantation in Korea, he would like to make a slight contribution towards Eiichi's work, whereupon he handed Eiichi two hundred yen, in addition to the hundred yen he had borrowed from him long ago.

Eiichi simply said "Thank you" in taking it and Shinoda remarked on his curtness.

"As I can make effective use of the money it doesn't matter whether it's two hundred yen or three hundred yen," said Eiichi. "I'll spend it for you."

The room was a large one and commanded a wide view over Kobé. All sorts of nice things to eat were brought in.

"Shall I call Kohidé?" asked Shinoda abruptly.

Eiichi begged to be excused, but Shinoda said that it would be amusing and that he should like to see Eiichi's embarrassment. Apparently he wanted to enjoy Eiichi's embarrassment, and he took his plump form off down the passage on his way to the telephone.

Kobé was being quietly enveloped in the evening twilight. The autumn air was very clear and the electric lights in the streets shone brightly. Eiichi could see the slums at Shinkawa, the harbour works, the big cranes at the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Yard, and away off to Hyogo, to the Mitsubishi Shipbuilding Yard and the chimneys of the Kanegafuchi Spinning Mill. From Wada Point to Takatori and Suma,—all was visible.

Shinoda came back along the passage.

"She's coming,—Kohidé," he said. "When I told her you were here she said it was very strange."

Eiichi asked Shinoda how he knew that he was acquainted with Kohidé, and learnt that when Shinoda came back from Korea he had heard about it.

Eiichi felt as if an old wound was being re-opened. Shinoda began talking about various enterprises for making money and Eiichi asked him many questions about them.

"You don't care for business, do you?" said Shinoda, and Eiichi dismissed it as "Useless."

"Yes, I suppose it seems so to persons who are not avaricious, like you," said Shinoda.

"I am avaricious," said Eiichi—"too avaricious."

"Really?" said Shinoda. "Perhaps you are."

When the dinner came Shinoda was perplexed by Eiichi's announcement that he was a vegetarian. The waitress, a middle-aged woman, said jokingly that Eiichi must be a priest.

"Then I suppose you don't drink either?" said Shinoda.

"No," said Eiichi.

"You're very strict," said Shinoda.

"It's not that," said Eiichi. "It's because I don't care about it. The only thing that amuses me is playing with the children of the poor."

Then Shinoda began chaffing Eiichi and called for a bottle of champagne cider for him while he himself drank wine. "I get too fat if I drink saké," he explained.

Eiichi did not turn the conversation to religious topics. He only talked about the beauty of the view and the excellence of the repast.

"Don't you think Kohidé's very beautiful?" asked Shinoda abruptly.

"Yes, I think she is very beautiful," said Eiichi.

"Then you're not an ascetic after all?"

"Certainly not."

"Kohidé says that you were disappointed in love."

"Kohidé says so? I?"

"She says she loves you because you were disappointed."

"Stop your chaffing. I am not the person I was. As a Christian disciple I have forgotten love and sensual pleasures."

"Then I suppose you'd refuse to make Kohidé your wife if she made you a proposal? Have you the power to refuse her?"

"Don't be afraid," said Eiichi. "I am strong enough to put love on one side."

After that they were both silent for some time.

Eiichi looked thoughtful. The room was quiet and the quietness pleased him immensely. From morning to night in the slums and at the office he lived in a turmoil and he had often longed for quietness like that. Thanks to a friend he could now enjoy quietness. He thought that he would like to remain silent as long as possible,—to the point of making Shinoda angry. He was not thinking of anything; his mind remained like a sheet of blank paper. Nor was he looking at anything; he merely sat breathing quietly. He felt very happy sitting there and he did not want to eat or drink—only to be quiet.

The waitress, who had also been silent for some time, thought that they should be more lively.

"You ain't come here to practise religion, have you?" she asked. "Can't you be a little merry?"

"Oh, don't trouble about us," said Shinoda. "There's a beautiful girl coming soon and then the gentleman here will be lively enough."

Eiichi laughed unconcernedly.

Just then they heard Kohidé's voice in the passage: she was talking to the maid who was showing her the way.

"There, Mr. Niimi, she's come," said Shinoda,—“the girl who's been pining for you.”

The waitress ran to the sliding screen and opened it.

"Will ye please enter," she said, bowing.

Kohidé knelt at the entrance and bowed.

"I'm afraid I'm late," she said.

Advancing to where they were seated she again bowed respectfully. She looked very beautiful, with her hair done in a graceful chignon and with the flowing skirts of her bright-patterned silk dress. Eiichi thought it was no wonder that men become dissipated.

As she sat down between them she filled Shinoda's glass with wine.

"How long it is since I've seen you, Mr. Niimi," she said. "How many years is it?"

"Well, I've really forgotten," said Eiichi.

"You've got thinner. Has anything been the matter?"

"He lives in the slums," said Shinoda. "I've been to pay him a visit in the slums to-day and it's an awful place, really. You go and see him. It will teach you something. Mr. Niimi lives with the poor and helps them. It's really astonishing. I couldn't do it."

"Oh, I heard something about it from a newspaper man," said Kohidé. "I should really like to see. Can I come, Mr. Niimi,—a person like me?"

"But you couldn't go like that."

"Oh, of course I should put on an ordinary dress. I should like to see."

"You'd defile his abode if you went there," said Shinoda.

"Do be quiet, Mr. Shinoda. Can I come, Mr. Niimi?"

"Yes, come along," said Eiichi.

"O-ho, Mr. Niimi," said Shinoda. "You don't drink saké and you don't eat fish and meat. It's only women you care about, eh? You're a strange disciple."

"Really, doesn't Mr. Niimi drink saké or eat fish?" said Kohidé. "How changed he is."

"He's become a Christian," said Shinoda.

"So I heard," said Kohidé. "I heard that he was preaching in Moto-machi. He has changed."

"No, I haven't changed very much," said Eiichi.

"What's become of that person?" asked Kohidé.

"Who's that person?" said Eiichi.

"That person! Don't mock me like that, Mr. Niimi," and Kohidé showed signs of shyness while her face became crimson.

"Oh, the person at Hiroshima?" said Eiichi.

"Yes, what's become of her?"

"It's all finished."

"Is she still at Hiroshima?"

"No, she's gone into the country at Tokushima,—teacher in an elementary school probably. I don't get any news of her so I don't know what she's doing."

"There you are, Kohidé," said Shinoda. "That's why I was telling him that you wanted to marry him."

"Oh, did you?" said Kohidé. "How kind of you!"

"You were very earnest about it the other day when you said it, weren't you?" said Shinoda. "Now you can make him a direct proposal."

Kohidé laughed shyly and expostulated.

"Then it was a story you told me the other day?" said Shinoda.

"There's no reason why Mr. Niimi should marry a person like me," said Kohidé.

"Oh, that doesn't matter," said Shinoda. "Suppose you try it."

Shinoda said this so comically that he made them all laugh. Kohidé was very lively that evening for some reason,—a change from her usual manner.

"Mr. Niimi," she said archly, as she filled Shinoda's glass, "will you have me for your wife?"

"That's it, that's it," said Shinoda. "You go for him."

"Are you in earnest?" asked Eiichi.

"Of course I am," said Kohidé, and she suddenly became grave and looked at Eiichi with wide-opened eyes.

But Eiichi had heard too much of sexual depravity in the slums to be moved.

"I'll think it over," he said carelessly.

"Love on one side only is no use," said Kohidé.

"Don't fall in love with me," said Eiichi quietly. "You'll have to be an ascetic to love me."

"There," said Kohidé. "What can I do to become your wife?"

"Well, you'd have to live in the slums."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Kohidé. "I was poor before and it won't be hard for me to become poor again. I would live with a beggar if I loved him."

"What devotion!" said Eiichi.

"Isn't that right, Mr. Shinoda? Ain't I in earnest? Mr. Niimi, perhaps you won't have me because I'm a geisha. Isn't it so? Yes, I'm sure it is. You're so good and you're afraid to be defiled."

"What earnestness!" said Eiichi.

"Don't joke, Mr. Niimi. I am in earnest," said Kohidé, and indeed her whole soul was in the appeal.

Shinoda smoked a cigarette and listened with an amused air.

"I'll be honest with you, Kohidé," said Eiichi. "I don't like people who don't work."

"But I will work if you'll take me," said Kohidé. "I'll work myself to the bone. You know the other day a university student—Inoué was his name, I think—married a Shimbashi

geisha in Tokyo named Kuzuha. I've got as much courage as Kuzuha."

From her words Eiichi was able to read Kohidé's heart a little. He knew from what she said that Shinoda had arranged the scene, which was like one in a theatre. Eiichi drew back and leant against the screens behind him.

Kohidé received a cigarette from Shinoda and began to smoke it. Eiichi thought it was funny that a woman who could say such things should yet blow the smoke through her nostrils, and he idly watched the wreaths of blue smoke till they disappeared at the ceiling. Outside all was silent. Only over Shinkaichi and Sannomiya was the sky lit up. Inside, in the large room, the electric lights seemed dull and there were clouds of tobacco smoke, making him feel stifled.

Suddenly Eiichi felt called upon to stand up.

"I must say good-bye now, Mr. Shinoda," he said. "Thank you for your entertainment. Good-bye, Kohidé, I must be going now," and he started to leave.

"Don't be in a hurry," said Shinoda. "Let's have some more talk. If you go now you'll cut it short. Your talk with Kohidé was awfully interesting to me. Won't you go on?"

"No, I've got some business," said Eiichi. "It's eight o'clock, isn't it?"

"No, it's only half-past seven," said Shinoda. "It's early yet."

"You mustn't go yet, Mr. Niimi," said Kohidé. "I haven't finished my talk with you yet."

But Eiichi insisted sulkily that he was going. Even the waitress tried to detain him, but finally Shinoda and Kohidé, not knowing what else to do, allowed him to depart.

When he returned home from the Higashi Tokiwa it was yet early and he at once went to Nakamichi-suji alone and commenced preaching. The thought of the three hundred yen which Shinoda had given him was forgotten. Kohidé's love story was forgotten, and Eiichi, with all his heart and soul, passionately preached the Gospel of Christ.

CHAPTER LII

Kohidé in the Slums



THE next afternoon Shinoda came to the insurance office and told Eiichi why Kohidé had got so excited, which was because Shinoda had offered beforehand to guarantee her ransom and pay all her bills. Eiichi then suddenly understood what had happened. Shinoda had wished to do something in return for Eiichi's kindness, and it was his intention to assist Eiichi to a wife. It was this that had prompted Kohidé to make the proposal.

Eiichi felt deeply grateful to Shinoda for his kindness, and Shinoda spoke in very high terms of Eiichi's work and promised to help him in every way he could. He also told Eiichi contritely that he had turned over a new leaf and that his wife and child were now restored to health.

Eiichi did not think much about Kohidé. As before he continued to sleep with the gamin Matsuzo and to pass his days in forgetfulness of love and passion.

Three days after he had met Kohidé a long letter came from her. Contrary to Eiichi's expectation she was quite in earnest and repeated in the letter all she had told him that evening. In reply Eiichi sent her only the following poem:

I forbid any one to love me, for I am the child of God, the child of liberty, and will not be bound in the chains of love. Break not through my fence,—the fence that surrounds the altar to God erected within my breast; destroy not my liberty therein.

Maidens, do not love me: what is the use of love without liberty? what can you do with sorrowful love?

I have made a vow that till the day of liberty comes I shall not be bound by the chains of love.

When Eiichi went out into the alley with the intention of posting the poem a feeling of pity overwhelmed him. He thought that he would like to be loved by a woman, and he felt that it was only his obstinacy that made him reject the strong passion of Kohidé,—the beautiful Kohidé, with her large shining eyes, rosy complexion and wonderful hair, who stood with her arms open to receive him. At such moments he thought he could smell the scent and the musk which she used. He felt that he was denying his own manhood, and he could not put aside the thought of how delicious it must be to be loved by a beautiful woman. At other moments he could not but be oppressed with anxiety as to Kohidé's real character. He himself was a consumptive and what fate had in store for him in the future he did not know. He did not deny love and he felt it was contradictory of him therefore to deny sexual intercourse and reproduction.

He was astonished at his own strength of mind when he put the letter into the post, but there was no doubt that after he had put it in he began to wonder what sort of answer he would get. Shinoda must be trying to draw him to Kohidé again, he thought. Into what a world of temptation had he come,—throwing into confusion the hallowed sanctuary in which he had spent a year and a half undisturbed.

It was not that he thought he had been deserted by God. It was rather that he could not consistently embrace the love he ought to embrace and was plunged into a world of anxiety. He wished to live with beauty. But while he wished to associate with Kohidé he felt the contradictoriness of the whole thing while he was himself the companion of ugliness, the disciple of one kimono, the martyr of a life from which beauty had been driven out. If he were to desire beauty and to live with beautiful persons he would have to change his whole condition of life. From a life where one thought nothing of sleeping with lepers, he would, at the least, have to remove to a place suitable for beauty,—to a world where beauty could be appreciated. Thus was Eiichi torn between beauty and righteousness. Tormented by anxiety,—wondering whether her answer would come to-day or to-morrow morning,—he decided that if Kohidé loved him so madly he would be guided by the strength of her love.

However, Kohidé did not show him the strength of her love. Two weeks passed without his receiving any news from her.

In the meantime he was very busy arranging all sorts of things arising from his decision to resign from the insurance company and devote himself to relief work in the slums. As to his reasons for this, for one thing he had received three hundred yen from Shinoda. But another and stronger reason was that Dr. Williams had acted as guide through the slums to an American from Georgia,—the director of a brick manufacturing company and a very strong believer, who had come out to make an inspection of missions in the Orient. He had been greatly struck with Eiichi's work and had promised that when he returned to America he would guarantee Eiichi the sum of fifty dollars a month for the period of two years.

Eiichi had determined to do his best to assist the poor, as this had now become his life-work, and for the sake of the children in the slums he thought first of all that he would like to publish some illustrated stories from the Bible.

So on the 17th of November he resigned from the insurance company. The first thing he did was to purchase at a second-hand shop a desk for thirty sen and a chair which cost twenty sen more than the desk, though it was not a comfortable chair to sit on. He wished to work—as diligently as he had done at the insurance office—at writing stories from the Bible, and he chose first the story of the friendship of David and Jonathan. Although his work did not come up to his expectations, nevertheless he was much happier than he was when writing figures at the insurance office.

Being all day in the slums and seeing what was going on, he found that there were all sorts of things happening. "Ukare-bushi" Matsuko stole a quilt and pawned it and was arrested. Eiichi knew nothing about it till a detective came from the police station and told him. Eiichi went to the police station and Matsuko was brought out of the cell and allowed to go home on the entreaty of Eiichi. Then the gamin Matsuzo stole some telegraph wire and sold it to a secondhand dealer. Eiichi being informed of this by a detective had to go to the police-box where Matsuzo had been arrested and get the policeman to release him. The two ex-policemen, Yanasé and Hida, who worked at the Premier Cycle Works, on the evening of their first pay-day were

very good, Eiichi thought, but on the next day it appeared that they had gone out to a brothel, for they did not come back till two o'clock in the morning. On the 17th of November, they came home with a girl who was sent by the eating-house in Naka-machi with a request for settlement of the bill, which came to five yen and seventy-two sen, and Eiichi had to pay it.

Yoshida, who lived opposite, brought home a woman with a swollen, pasty face whom he had picked up somewhere, and made her his wife. But after five days she ran away and went to the house of a man named Yagi, who acted as a pimp for street-walkers. Yagi's wife, however, would not help her and she came to Eiichi for assistance. Eiichi would have taken her into his house, but Yoshida still hankered after her and came round drunk every evening, acting like a beast, so that Eiichi found it impossible to keep her. But he made her an allowance of rice every day.

It was now November and every day there were cases of people falling down exhausted in the street. Each time, even when it was a long way off, somebody came to inform Eiichi. Of course he could not take in all these people, and when he communicated with the City Hall about them, the City authorities always referred him to the police, while the police referred him back to the City Hall. The result was that the people generally died in the street. When they were dead the City Hall was quite willing to take charge of them, which caused Eiichi to make the sarcastic comment that the Kobé City authorities would not help people when they were alive and treated them as a nuisance, but immediately they were dead they became very obliging.

Moreover, when the City Hall did help such persons they soon ran away. The City authorities had no poor-house, but allowed sixteen sen a day to a charitable organisation called the Guardian Society for each sick person placed under its care. As the charitable organisation had an orphanage to maintain and an infirmary for old people, besides relief to the poor, however they tried to economise expenses, they could not keep sick persons on sixteen sen a day.

Eiichi was surprised at the number of people who ran away from the society's home, and went to see it for himself. He found that the society had been granted the use of an old school

building situated under the embankment of the Minatogawa, and that six or seven sick persons were stuffed into one room of six mats. They had five or six rooms like that. Moreover, Eiichi happened to pay his visit at the time of the midday meal and he found that the food served was quite unsuitable for sick persons. Eiichi departed in disgust, reviling the charitable enterprises of the capitalists. Returning to the slums he at once made arrangements to take an empty house which stood at the end of the lane on the opposite side to his, in which to provide for sick people. He arranged that the sick persons should have a room each and as there were only two rooms he was only able to accommodate two. His first patient was a pilgrim beggar from Shikoku named Uno, who was suffering from beri-beri, but had run away from the Municipal Hospital at Minatogawa. He was a silent man of about fifty with a refined air. The patient in the back room was "Oitabero's" former wife, called "Umé the Devil," and her child Masaichi. She had received the name on account of her horribly emaciated face and her long eye-teeth, which made her look like a she-devil. Owing to illness—she was in the tertiary stage of syphilis—she was unable to go out as a beggar. Eiichi found her lying in front of an eating-house in Azuma-dori and carried her home on his back.

These were not the only ones that came to him for relief whom he did not turn away. Toda, the gardener, abandoned his wife and four children and went off with another woman. Eiichi thus found himself obliged to take them all into his house, which became very lively. Mrs. Toda, who was still young, deposited the baby in a tub while she spun flax, which gave a family air to the house, and the crying of the baby kept them all very busy.

Meantime two weeks had elapsed since he had sent the poem to Kohidé. Then she suddenly arrived in a jinrikisha. She had on a good, black silk cloak and had her hair done in simple fashion, and when she first entered the alley Eiichi wondered who the lady could be.

Eiichi was out in the alley at the time playing with Toda's baby, which he was tossing up, up to the sky, ever so far. It was about two o'clock on a beautiful afternoon, with a clear autumn sky, and the sun shining brightly into every corner of the alley very cheerfully.

"Oh," cried Eiichi, when he caught sight of Kohidé, "I am glad to see you," and indeed he felt glad to welcome her. "I hardly thought you'd dare to come," he added. "How bold you are!"

"I? Well, I've got spirit enough for that," replied Kohidé.

Kohidé took a parcel from the jinrikishaman who was following her and told him to wait, and the jinrikishaman, wiping the sweat from his forehead, went back along the alley.

Eiichi called Mrs. Toda and got her to take the baby, after which he conducted Kohidé to the large seventeen-mat room.

Kohidé seated herself on the rickety chair.

"Is that your baby?" she asked.

"Oh, no," replied Eiichi. "That's Mrs. Toda's baby. She and her four children live with me. The father went off with another woman,—he was a gardener."

"Oh," laughed Kohidé, "I thought it was your child, it looked such a darling."

"I suppose you were a bit startled at first?"

"Yes, I was really quite startled, especially as I thought that you had no wife and child."

"Well, I'm glad you've come, at any rate."

Eiichi called old Mrs. Kishimoto and told her to bring in some tea, but Mrs. Toda brought it in of her own accord. Some children who wanted to see Kohidé were peeping into the room from the alley.

"A peach! A peach!" cried the unabashed Tako, and all the other little children commenced to imitate him, crying, "A peach! A peach!"

Kohidé laughed when she heard them.

"It embarrasses me to have them all staring at me," she said.

"Yes, but what can we do?" said Eiichi.

"Don't you have any doors? Don't you ever close the doors?"

"Oh, no, we never close up. If thieves want to come in they are quite at liberty to do so."

"Don't thieves ever come?"

"Sometimes they do, but we never inform the police."

"Really? I suppose if we were all as good as you are we should do the same."

"Oh, if you've got money and clothes there's a fear of their

being taken, but there's nothing to be afraid of if you've only got the kimono you go about in and nothing else to take."

Kohidé caught sight of some twelve or thirteen children peeping through the glass sliding-doors.

"I bought some cakes for the children in the neighbourhood," she said, and she took out of a big cake-box, holding some three or four pounds, some star-shaped biscuits covered with sugar. Opening the glass-doors she gave one to each of the children. The children received the cakes and went running off, and almost before there seemed time for them to have got home a crowd of thirty or forty children had collected.

"Teacher, teacher, give us some cake."

"Teacher, teacher, give us some biscuits."

Kohidé was startled at the number of children and even Eiichi was astonished that their number should have increased so rapidly. Kohidé's biscuits were soon exhausted.

"Good gracious! There isn't any more," she said regretfully. "Please change some money for me," she added, turning round to Eiichi. "I'll give the children two sen each."

But Eiichi stopped her.

"Don't give them any money," he said. "It has a bad effect on them."

Kohidé was like a queen among them, which pleased her.

"Are the slums very large?" she asked. "Are these the slums? If these are the slums I shouldn't mind coming to live here at all."

"Have you the courage to live in the slums?" Eiichi asked. "There's lots of bugs."

"Bugs? I don't like bugs. Not that I've ever seen any for that matter. What are they like?"

"Well, if you'd been a little earlier you'd have seen plenty of them. In the summer nights you can catch fifty or sixty of them in a night."

"Gracious! They must be a nuisance. I'd rather be excused the bugs. I'm afraid I couldn't come to live in the slums."

After that Eiichi guided Kohidé round the slums. As the beautiful Kohidé went past, women and old people popped their heads out of the doors in the alleys to see the strange sight, and examined Kohidé's face very intently. Thirty or forty chil-

dren followed them. Some ten of the children collected round Eiichi, some of them holding his hand and some of them clinging to the sleeves of his kimono. Not content with that one of them went so far as to cling to Kohidé's fine black silk cloak with his dirty hands, causing Kohidé some embarrassment. Kohidé looked at Eiichi appealingly.

"Don't catch hold of the lady's sleeve," said Eiichi to the child. "Your little paws are dirty, you know," whereupon the child clung to Eiichi's skirt. Eiichi gave it the end of his girdle to hold.

As Eiichi and Kohidé, attended by a band of forty or fifty children, went round the slums in procession, the people who knew Eiichi greeted him.

Among the two-mat rooms they met the fat beggar-woman Haru with a baby on her back.

"Master's got a fine girl to-day," she said. "Ain't that nice? Is she your wife, master?" she asked boldly, right in front of Kohidé.

"No, I haven't any wife yet," said Eiichi.

"Why don't you make this fine-looking girl your wife, master?" said Haru.

Kohidé pretended not to hear and chucked under the chin the little baby Haru was carrying while she cooed to it. She showed that she was quite used to children, a fact which impressed Eiichi.

After they had been round the slums Kohidé was shocked and said that she could not live there for a day even. She was still more shocked when Eiichi told her that there were eleven thousand poor people living in those slums.

Kohidé seemed discouraged and said that she was going home. But just then there was a sound of scurrying feet in the lane at the back, which suddenly became very lively. Then there came a sound of feet running over the leads of Eiichi's wash-house and all the children ran off in that direction, while Hayashi came rushing into the house to Kohidé's astonishment.

"Master," cried Hayashi, "there's a trap. Hide me."

Eiichi was silent, but Hayashi pulled out a quilt from the pile which had been neatly folded by old Kishimoto, and spreading it as though for a sick person, quickly got under it.

Two or three detectives in disguise peeped into Eiichi's room.

"I thought one of 'em came in here," said one.

"This is a Christian place," said another, and they soon went off.

"I'm afraid," said Kohidé in a low voice. "What is it, Mr. Niimi?"

"They've set a trap for gamblers," he replied.

The two sat silent for a time listening to the talk at the back and in front of the house, which was really very amusing. They were talking about who had escaped and who had got away over the leads, and who it was that had jumped so bravely from one roof to another. It appeared that although the trap had fallen no one had been caught.

Hayashi heard the talk from under the quilt and put out his head like a tortoise.

"My! That was a narrow squeak," he said. "A little more and they'd 'a' had me. You saved me that time, master. I was a little slow in shoving off,—in fact I was the last to leave. You saved me all right. I thought I was in for three or four months of jail."

He crawled out of the quilt and, mingling with the crowd outside, told the story of his escape.

"I'm going now," said Kohidé. "I'm afraid."

She went out into the alley and the fourteen or fifteen persons standing in front of Hanaé's house next door all stared at her, as she disappeared down the alley dejectedly.

Two days after Kohidé's visit, in the evening, Eiichi had an unexpected visit from Mr. Shinji Otonashi, just at the time when the drunken Yoshida opposite was making a row in the alley.

Eiichi was just then wanting some one to talk to and he welcomed Otonashi as an interesting visitor. Yoshida was still grumbling in the alley, and looking out Eiichi saw that he was not alone. Two well-dressed gentlemen were also standing outside the house. Eiichi thought that they were two friends of Otonashi's and asked them to come in, with an apology for the poverty of the accommodation.

"Don't," said Otonashi. "Those chaps are spies. They follow me round wherever I go. . . . Mr. Niimi, excuse my abruptness, but I came to ask you to do something for me. You assist people, don't you?"

"Yes, yes, for you certainly."

"Thank you."

Otonashi was dressed as a clergyman of the English Church. He had on a collar that stood up all round and his waistcoat went right up to his collar so that you could only see a little bit of white in front. He was of a genial disposition, with a round, pink face. His hair, however, was not in accord with his dress, for he wore it long like a poet and it hung down over his collar behind.

"Well, it's like this," went on Otonashi. "There's a man who's in trouble over the O. affair." *

Eiichi did not at first understand what Otonashi meant by the O. affair, but he soon remembered that there had recently been considerable talk in the papers about the relations of O. of Shingu with the —— affair.

"He's a man named Takami," said Otonashi, "and as he's a relation of O.'s they've asked him to resign his position as teacher in the elementary school. It's impossible for him to earn his living in the district and he's in trouble. We want to send him to a theological seminary,—he's a member of my church. He intends to leave Shingu soon. Could you help him?"

"I suppose he won't object to stopping in this noisy place," said Eiichi.

"Oh, no, that would be splendid. It would be an education for him. . . . But haven't you had any spies follow you since you came to live here?"

"No, none at all."

"That's strange."

"What did you come from Shingu for? Only about this business?"

"No, I came about some business for O.'s wife and some other things. Well, I'm glad you'll help him. It's taken a load of anxiety off my mind. I was wondering what I should do with him. I am glad."

Eiichi and Otonashi had been friends in their Meiji Gakuin days. Otonashi, however, had been twelve or thirteen years older

* The reference is to the charge of high treason brought in 1910 against Kotoku, a well-known Socialist, Dr. Oishi of Shingu, and twenty-four others. They were all condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to imprisonment in the case of twelve. Kotoku and Oishi were among those executed.

than Eiichi and had been the director of an orphanage, the president of a newspaper company and the principal of an elementary school in the course of his career. After that he went in for a special course at a theological seminary. As he was so much older than Eiichi their intimacy did not become very profound, but they went for many walks together and had many discussions. After Eiichi had gone back to Tokushima, Otonashi had gone to a mission at Shingu. They had corresponded with each other and when Eiichi had gone to live at Hyogo he had contributed two or three times to a magazine called "Sunset" which Otonashi and Mr. O. were publishing.

After they had talked for half an hour Otonashi left, as he appeared to be busy, upon which the two detectives obediently followed him out of the alley.

The day after Otonashi's visit a man who said he was a higher police official came from the Sannomiya Police Station and inquired what Otonashi had come to talk about, what connection Eiichi had with him, what connection he had with ——, what connection he had with Mr. O., and what Eiichi's opinions were of Socialism.

Eiichi stated them clearly.

"I am a Christian Socialist," he said, "but at the same time I am a pacifist. I have come to the slums to assist the poor and to convert them. But you needn't be anxious. Although I esteem the poor workers I have no scheme to kill any one. I respect all,—the workers and all. Perhaps I should rather be called a follower of Christ than a Christian Socialist."

This only made the detective still more troublesome and he questioned Eiichi very closely about what sort of people in Europe held such opinions and who preached them in Japan. To all his questions Eiichi answered clearly.

However, from that time Eiichi was on the black list of the Kobé police. Every three days a detective came and peeped through Eiichi's glass windows.

On the day following her visit to the slums Kohidé sent a long letter saying that she could not imitate Eiichi. She said nothing about having any further relations with him.

Soon after the end of November Eiichi set about making preparations for Christmas. He had finished his Bible story of the friendship of David and Jonathan and he took the manu-

script to Mr. Matahei Yoshino, a member of the church at Nunobiki, who took a great interest in Eiichi and was the manager of the Kobé Printing Company. Eiichi asked him whether he could print the book before Christmas, to which Mr. Yoshino agreed and also said that the company would undertake the publication of the work.

CHAPTER LIII

Miss Higuchi



ON a cold rainy day at the end of November Eiichi left Shinkawa to bring back his stepmother from Awa. He returned with her to the slums four days later. Just as he got back Tomoya Takami, a good-looking young man of thirty-two or thirty-three, but appearing considerably older, arrived on the introduction of Otonashi. Eiichi, for the sake of his stepmother, had taken yet another house at a rental of two yen and fifty sen a month, in which he installed her.

Takami was busily going about the city every day looking for a position. One evening he related to Eiichi the following circumstance:

"The Japan Steamship Company has an opening for two clerks and about two weeks ago they put an advertisement of the vacant situations in the paper. They got applications from five thousand seven hundred persons. The news agency was quite astonished. Business seems to be very bad just now."

Business was, indeed, very bad, and in consequence Eiichi received requests for assistance every day from a large number of people, whom he helped in various ways. The Toda family was his special delight. Eiichi, who was naturally fond of babies, was fonder of the Toda baby than anything else. He was in the habit of saying repeatedly that the most beautiful of God's creations was a baby, and Takami, hearing this, smiled sadly. He had left his wife and daughter at his native place.

Christmas came and Eiichi made more preparations than he had done the previous year. As he had Takami to help him this year, he thought that he would have something very amusing. He planned to give a beggars' party on Christmas Day, and to erect a tent on an open space in Azuma-dori which would hold eight hundred poor children and where he could keep a merry

Christmas. He also intended to give a treat there at noon to a hundred beggars. He could not do it by himself, however, so he spoke about it to Dr. Williams and asked whether the ladies of the Church would not help him. The ladies willingly undertook the task. There was no lack of women helpers among his own church members, from Shin to the Inari-worshipper Ju, but they were all very busy and there was no reliance to be placed on them.

Recently there had been coming to the services regularly a lady of twenty-five or twenty-six, accompanied by her younger sister. Eiichi was not yet sufficiently well acquainted with her to ask her to take part in the work of the church. She was the forewoman of the folders at the Kobé Printing Works, where she had worked for seven years. On the first evening she followed the open-air preaching up the alley to the meeting-house, where she listened outside and went away. The next time she came with her younger sister, a nice-looking girl of seventeen or eighteen, and entered the meeting-house. Eiichi thought that the seeds of faith were sprouting, but did not make any attempt to inquire into her experiences.

On the 21st of December, "Friendship," which might be called Eiichi's maiden work, was published. Eiichi had drawn all the illustrations for the book himself and he was troubled to see how badly they were done. Nevertheless, he was delighted to think that he had produced a book, however slight.

On the 22nd of December Eiichi was busy here and there making preparations for putting up his tent. He was glad to find that Tomita, Hayashi, Ueki and other of their public-spirited companions were willing to do everything they could to help him, so that by the evening of the 24th of December the tent was all prepared.

Tomita had told Eiichi that he must have a watchman, but Eiichi said that there was no necessity and had not engaged one. On Christmas morning, when he went very early to see the tent, Eiichi found a beggar-woman lying inside the tent, apparently on the point of death. He questioned her, but could get no answer, and there being nothing else to do he carried her on his shoulder to his sick ward in Kitahon-machi. She was the wreck of a street-walker.

Some seven or eight ladies of the Kobé Church appeared be-

tween eight and nine o'clock and Eiichi went off to the crockery dealer near the Ikuta Shrine to buy a hundred dishes. By ten o'clock there was a great pot, capable of holding a bushel of rice, boiling on a stove by the side of the tent. The atmosphere was now that of a great festival. He had distributed the invitations the night before and some of the beggars had already come and were waiting in the tent.

Most of the young men in the slums whom he had converted came to help him:—Takeda, Asai, Motoyama and Hanaé's brother Katsunosuké, all came to help him. Although Eiichi had made no request, Miss Higuchi had taken a day's holiday from the Printing Works and had also come to help him. That day she had not brought her younger sister with her but had come alone. She was busy drawing water.

All the people from the Church wore aprons over their clothes and appeared very busy, but as they were reluctant to lay aside their pretensions to be refined ladies the work made little progress. The young men had to lend a hand in everything, till at last Motoyama said to Eiichi, "They ain't no use, teacher, these people that come from the Hill. Miss Higuchi does more work than any of 'em."

Miss Higuchi, indeed, worked with all her 'might,—not chattering in a silver voice like the people from the Hill, but carrying on her work, in silence and quickly, so that Eiichi, seeing her, was not a little impressed. He knew that Miss Higuchi was not an ordinary woman worker; her manners were so refined and polite that he knew she came of a good family. There were three or four beautiful girls among the people who came from the Church on the Hill, and among them a girl from the higher school of Kobé Girls' College. There was also a girl looking like the daughter of a merchant. But they none of them attracted Eiichi. Miss Higuchi was the only one whose conduct made an impression on him.

Shortly after twelve o'clock, although only a hundred invitations had been issued, a crowd of a hundred and twenty beggars had collected. Eiichi, however, found seats for them all inside the big tent and got the ladies to wait on them. The good things provided did not make a long list. There was rice boiled with red beans, meat stew, a slice of fish, soup and salad. Then there was a bag of biscuits for each and five oranges. The

meal lasted for over an hour, as some of them ate only half and said that they would take the rest home and come again. Others came and asked for a share for their daughters; other more dreadful cases said that they would eat enough to last two days and had as many as seventeen helpings. Others again brought receptacles into which they put their helpings. The more crude put five or six helpings of rice into their aprons or sleeves to carry home. The ladies who waited on them were astonished and laughed as they came out of the tent, imitating the beggars by pretending to eat like savages or to put their bowls in their sleeves. Eiichi began to feel almost anxious lest his beggars' party should end in being merely an occasion for insulting the beggars.

Miss Higuchi, however, said nothing. Eiichi noticed that she was superior to the more cultured ladies and did not laugh as she went on with her work, pouring the rice unconcernedly into the beggars' sleeves. Watching her from outside the tent Eiichi felt a sudden rush of tears to his eyes at the way in which she expressed her sympathy with the beggars and her understanding of their feelings. The beggars' greedy conduct and Miss Higuchi's divine compassion made a picture which he thought nothing could surpass.

All eyes were turned on Miss Higuchi and the beggar receiving the rice. All the ladies from the Church on the Hill, standing outside the tent, cried, "Good gracious! Did you see that?" and began to laugh. Takeda gazed on the scene seriously. All the other beggars—the lame, the lepers (there were two present), the Shikoku pilgrim, the cripples, the old,—all who were not blind fixed their eyes on the greedy beggar, a man of about forty who had a large birthmark covering the whole of the right side of his face. Then they all began to laugh, but the beggar was quite unabashed.

"Missus," cried a loud voice, "put some in my sleeve. It'll hold some more."

Tomita, who had been looking on, found his way to Eiichi.

"Beggars are greedy, ain't they?" he said. "I've been living in Shinkawa nearly ten years, but I never knew till now that beggars were so greedy. Who's the lady waiting on 'em? She's a wonder, she is. She's a well-made one too. Are there people like her living on the Hill?"

The beggars also saw how kind Miss Higuchi was and began to call to her specially. "Miss, gi' us a little more." "Ain't there any more soup, missus?" and other requests. As Miss Higuchi came out of the tent Takeda addressed her.

"You've become 'missus,' eh?" he said.

Owing to her looking old she really appeared to be like a wife, and her kind heart showed her things that unmarried girls would not have noticed.

In the evening there was a lively party of eight hundred children. The hosts were the students of the theological classes of the Kwansei Gakuin, and Eiichi was thus saved much trouble. It was a very lively scene. Miss Higuchi came with her younger sister.

CHAPTER LIV

Kohidé Again



ON December 26th, under the heading "A Lively Christmas in the Slums," the papers published a detailed description of Eiichi's work, covering two columns. Eiichi had now been a year in the slums and at last the papers were beginning to take some notice of him.

About noon Kohidé unexpectedly turned up again. She had come because what she had seen in the paper had made her envious.

Eiichi did not dislike seeing her; she was always beautiful to look at and that day she was looking especially beautiful. Eiichi thought that they should be grateful to her for showing her face in the slums.

Kohidé, however, was very irresolute in her manner. Eiichi's manner, also, was still more irresolute, for he had decided that he could not love for money's sake, a fact which Kohidé, who was a clever girl, quite understood. Eiichi knew that to be able to lead her luxurious life Kohidé must receive support from some patron and that if he made her his wife he would not get her undivided love. Nevertheless he realised that there was something which drew Kohidé's heart towards him. It would require thousands of yen, however, to make her his own and he thought that it was not necessary for him to purchase love. It would be a different thing if Kohidé flew into his arms with a pure heart, but she generally forgot Eiichi till Shinoda reminded her or a paragraph in the paper caused her to pay him a visit. However beautiful her face was Eiichi knew that there was a very wide gulf between them.

Still he could not help thinking how the mysterious hand of fate had brought her to sit on that rickety chair in a room in the slums.

Their eyes met. Kohidé's eyes were especially beautiful. As her black pupils flashed when she opened her eyes wide you could only see just a little of the white of her eye, and every time she rolled her eyes her silken soft eyelids moved gently. Her beautifully curved eyelashes, so long and regular, gave her eyes an indescribable expression. Eiichi himself was suffering from trachoma and his eyes were not beautiful. When he looked at Kohidé's beautiful pupils he felt inclined to cast down his own ugly eyes so as to hide them.

Love was the pursuit of beauty, and therefore they had only to sit as they were to be successful in love. If love was only the satisfaction of the sexual desires then love and beauty must be separated. Beauty would not last forever. Love and beauty could only be attained for a little time while they sat there. He did not demand greater love than that.

Such were the thoughts that ran through Eiichi's head.

The two sat there without speaking. Eiichi was silent because he thought it would be strange for him to ask her if she would love him, and Kohidé only toyed with her hands. What a beautiful hand she had! She had a sapphire ring and how well it suited her slender white finger! While there arose in Eiichi a desire to possess Kohidé he felt that living together and love were two quite different things. In any case he could not leave the slums, and for Kohidé to come and live in the slums meant that her beauty would fade. He doubted as to his right to possess beauty when he could not guarantee its preservation, and he felt inclined, though not without pain, to abandon any idea of ownership. He had a stepmother, he was consumptive, and he was poor,—all facts which forbade him the ownership of beauty. Also he now had a will of iron. If he decided that he would not love a woman, immediately his heart's promptings were stilled and he became passive. Lately he had had many opportunities of meeting the beautiful Kohidé, but for more than a year he had restrained himself without any trouble and the promptings of sexual desire had not moved him.

Eiichi was glad that he could approach Kohidé with a pure heart, but he wondered whether Kohidé's beauty would be appreciated by him after he had possessed her. His heart was cold and far from such thoughts in her presence. Eiichi was as delicate as a woman. He had often thought that if he had been

a woman he would have had a pure heart. Even to Kohidé he could draw near by an apprehension originating, as it were, from sexual sympathies.

However one regarded Kohidé she was a very beautiful woman. The only thing that displeased him was that she did not stretch out her arms to him. Also she did not like to talk about the slums. She only liked to talk about herself and to hear the tale of love. He did not want to open the doors of restrained desire, but, with God's permission, to pursue beauty till he was satiated. This "Beatrice" seemed to him still to be a guide and a light.

Eiichi told her that his stepmother had come to live with him, and also that a friend had visited him, in connection with the O. affair, with the request that he would take under his care a man who was related to O. Kohidé knew all about the affair from what had appeared in the papers and listened with interest.

"Really, Mr. Niimi," she said with a sigh, "you are wonderful. Each time I meet you I marvel at how wonderful you are," and she opened wider her large eyes.

Eiichi informed Kohidé of his little book on "Friendship" that had just been published and Kohidé asked to see it. Eiichi produced a copy and they both looked at the pictures together. While they were doing this Kohidé put her hand on Eiichi's, which was laid on the desk.

"Really, I couldn't do what you do. It's extraordinary," she repeated.

Eiichi looked at her beautiful white hand and began to wonder what her meaning was in laying her hand on his. While he was gazing the saintly form of Miss Higuchi, as he had seen her the day before, appeared like a vision before him. Kohidé or Miss Higuchi? The saint or the beauty? He wanted them both; he wanted Miss Higuchi's soul in Kohidé's body.

For two or three minutes, with her hand placed on his, Kohidé continued to turn over the leaves of "Friendship." It was certainly not unpleasant.

Kohidé departed with the remark that the New Year was a busy time and she would not be able to come again, and Eiichi gazing at her departing form remained sunk in thought.

"Who is that pretty girl?" asked his stepmother. "She's a beauty."

Eiichi replied bluntly that she was a geisha.

CHAPTER LV

The New Year



FROM the day after Christmas Miss Higuchi came every day to Eiichi's house, taking advantage of the thirty minutes' rest they had at noon, and bringing three or four of the workgirls with her. The Kobé Printing Works were only a short distance away, and their midday meal finished, they hurried over to spend the remaining fifteen or twenty minutes in amusing themselves. Every day at ten minutes past twelve Miss Higuchi came in her tight-sleeved blue apron, bringing with her the thirteen-year-old Yayoi, and Kaji, who was fifteen or sixteen, and Fumi, who was a year older than Kaji. Every day she appeared outside the glass sliding-doors as the slum children did. Her face was round and white just like a European's, —much whiter than Kohidé's,—so that one almost wondered if she were a Eurasian. Her hair was wavy and curly and jet black, contrasting well with the colour of her skin. Although not a beauty there was something fine about her face, which, with her mature appearance, made all the people in the slums address her as "missus."

Although she came to enjoy herself she had not much to say and Eiichi began to suspect that she was crossing the bridge that is a short cut to love. He learned from her that when she was a little girl she had attended a Sunday School in Yokohama, that she read the Bible, and that the four of them had folded the sheets of Eiichi's book on "Friendship."

Miss Higuchi came from the eastern provinces as you could soon tell by her talk. Her pronunciation was clear, her language good, and her declamation excellent. Nevertheless, when all was said, Eiichi was a man who had received a higher education while Miss Higuchi was a workwoman and had never been even for a year to a girls' higher school. Therefore, as she was not a great beauty, her power of arousing love was limited.

She was only just an ordinary clever person, and Eiichi treated her pleasantly as a worker and put aside all thoughts of love.

Miss Higuchi was always very kind, sewing his torn clothes and cleaning the parts of the seventeen-mat room that had been neglected. Eiichi put it down to her religious zeal and attached no other significance to it.

Every morning at New Year's time there was a service in the meeting-house, when Eiichi gave an address on the Bible. After the address, all the people in the house, to the number of seventeen,—including Eiichi's stepmother, the two Kishimotos, Yanasé and Hida, the ex-policemen, the Toda family to the number of five, "Higé," Izu, Sanko, the three sick persons and himself,—inviting also their poor neighbours Katsu and Hanaé and their people,—sat down to eat rice-cake broth. Miss Higuchi showed great perseverance in coming to these early morning services and assisted in making the broth, though she would not stay to eat it, going off with her younger sister when it was made. Eiichi praised her in his heart for her self-restraint.

That New Year the quarrels were more numerous than in the previous year. "Ukarebushi" Matsuko was invited to the New Year feast at the wastepaper dealer's next to Shin's house and as they drank too much saké, a fight was soon started. Then when "Fighting" Yasu went in to settle matters the quarrel started again more fiercely than before. This led to more mediators going in and the quarrel split up into five. Matsuko commenced heating the tongs in Eiichi's kitchen, and when he was asked what it was for said that he was going to burn his enemies. Eiichi stopped him.

In the New Year of 1911, before nine o'clock in the morning, there were nineteen fights in the tenement houses in Kitahon-machi.

Then, as happened the year before, Eiichi was asked to assist in funeral expenses. On New Year's Day there was one funeral; on the 2nd of January there were two; and on the 5th there was one more,—at all of which he was asked to assist. Each time there was a funeral at the New Year it made Eiichi think of Ikkyu Osho's saying, "Each New Year is a mile-stone to the grave, bringing both pleasure and sorrow." Eiichi experienced an indescribable pang each time there was a death

among these poor suffering people. He felt that death must be endured and that he must press onward, but he could not help thinking of the wonder of life.

At the New Year, "Higé," the maker of earpicks, took a house for himself and moved into it. Takami also began to attend the newly-opened branch of the "Osaka Morning Post." Then Toda came back from prison in the Hokkaido and took away his family. Eiichi's family was thus suddenly reduced to six persons. Then about the middle of the month Mr. Takami's family came from Shingu in Kii Province and he took a house in Nakayamaté-dori.

On the 20th of January the newspapers issued an extra edition announcing the sentences passed on K. and O. and the others, altogether twenty-four persons. Twelve of them were sentenced to capital punishment. Eiichi, when he read the announcement, thought that it was a sign of the times and paid no further heed to it. That evening Takami came and talked to a late hour.

On the next day a higher police official from the Sannomiya Police Station paid Eiichi a very polite visit. Eiichi had not been visited by the police lately. The police official asked him his opinion on the K. affair and other similar questions.

Trade being dull the harbour was very quiet. Eiichi, however, went every Friday to Bentenhamma to preach the Gospel. The slackness of trade had thrown three or four hundred people out of work and some of them had sought fresh means of livelihood by stowing themselves away on ships for Yokohama, Moji, Korea, Formosa, and even Hongkong.

Soon after the New Year the emigrants' inns began to fill up with emigrants for Brazil. On the 6th of January a party of nearly six hundred emigrants started, and at the end of January it appeared that there was to be another party of six or seven hundred emigrants. At the emigrants' disinfection station near the slums of Shinkawa there were from one to two hundred emigrants going in and out every day.

On the morning of the 27th of January, Eiichi was suddenly visited by Soeda, a young man of nineteen who had been converted at the Friday morning services at Bentenhamma. Soeda had decided that he did not want to live in Japan any longer and

had arranged to sail on the *Kamo-maru* on the 30th of January as one of the emigrants. As unmarried men were not taken, however, he had decided to go under another name as the adopted son of another emigrant. Eiichi thought it was strange to change his name as he was a Christian, but Soeda was determined not to stay in Japan where trade was so bad, and was so strong in his desire to breathe a wider air that Eiichi gave him his blessing and wished him well in his future career.

All the people in the slums had to go out every day to look for work and it became common to see the men helping their wives making match-boxes as job work. As the number of people making match-boxes increased, the pay for a thousand dropped by five rin, from eight sen and five rin to eight sen. Without this pay, however, they would not have had sufficient to provide themselves even with rice-gruel, and so the work continued to spread.

Through the depression in trade wages fell steadily and every day the papers announced deaths by suicide owing to the difficulty of making a livelihood. Every time that Eiichi read of these cases in the paper he felt strongly that the time had come when Japan could no longer be allowed to sacrifice people like that.

But everybody was silent. "Socialism" was a word prohibited. The workers were dumb and the scholars also. Only the cold north wind from Siberia wailed across the wintry sky.

CHAPTER LVI

The Strike



IT was in February that Eiichi discovered that his neighbours Katsunosuké and Hanaé and Mitsu were not working. So one day, when Katsunosuké was basking in the sunshine, in the alley, Eiichi put aside his manuscript on the prophet Jeremiah which he had just begun to write and called him in and questioned him.

"We ain't working just now," was Katsu's explanation.

Questioned as to the reason he said that there was a strike on, the causes of which he recounted.

"It all began about a little girl of eleven who lives in Azumadori. She got burned,—right from her feet to her thighs,—nearly half her body. The girl's father,—he's in prison just now for gambling, so as it was pretty bad on the kid. Me and the man next above me, Akiyama, we went and asked for some money to get her some medicine. Well, you know, mister, the company wouldn't give a single penny and the reason, they say, was that it was her own fault that she got burned and the company wasn't responsible for money or anything. It was her own fault all right because she's only a little thing and when she was carrying the stuff from the drying-room she accidentally dropped some boxes that had been dipped in the phosphorus. So if any one's to blame, why the blame must fall on her all right. But if they give a kid of ten or eleven such dangerous work to do the company's in the wrong and I told 'em so straight out. They just left Tomé—that's her name—without calling in a doctor or doing anything. The company treats 'em too cruel, don't it? You know they didn't give a single penny when my elder sister died. Not a penny. The doctor said it was through her fingering the phosphorus that she lost all her teeth. It was

through the poison that her teeth come out, and just when this happened I'd been thinking how I could get even with such a cruel company that didn't give nothing when my sister died although she worked for 'em till her teeth come out. Then lately, you know, business has been bad and wages have been falling. Round summer we were getting something like a yen a day, but they've cut it down twice since then and now we don't get more than seventy-five or seventy-six sen a day, and so none of us are too pleased, you know. So I come out of the office and I went round everywhere calling out 'Drop your work. Drop your work,' and they all come rushing out crying 'What's the matter?' Then me and my friend—him what's above me, you know—both of us—we told 'em all about it, and then, because they was all discontented, they began calling out 'Strike, strike' and stopped all the machines. Then the women all come out wanting to know what's the matter and I made 'em a little speech,—how wages was falling and that the company wouldn't pay for medicine for those what got burned and wouldn't give anything towards the funerals of those what got killed, and that the company was no good and there was nothing for it but to go on strike. You know I've heard it all from you—about Labour unions over there—so I talk to 'em like that, and then all of 'em, down to the little girls, began calling out 'Let's go home. Let's go home,' and they went out,—yes, all the lot of 'em, from the men down to the women and girls—two hundred and forty or so of 'em. There wasn't a soul left in the place. That was the day before yesterday, you know. Well, since then the men have been meeting every night in Onoé-dori at Akiyama's place, and this afternoon me and Akiyama, we're going to see the company on behalf of the men."

Katsunosuké told the story with some pride. He had attended an elementary school for over three years and since then, for eight years, he had been in the employ of the Kobé Match Company, together with his two elder sisters. He was not a scholar, but he was a fine-looking chap and had a natural sharpness. He was only about nineteen, but he was greatly trusted by his mates, who were always ready to accept his advice. He had recently become very intimate with Eiichi and had gained a knowledge of Labour questions so that he had finally made up his mind to engineer a strike.

Eiichi asked Katsunosuké all about the names of the directors and managers of the company. He found that the persons who really controlled the company were Osaka and Morioka, men who were known to be usurers and also the owners of tenement-houses in the slums.

"Katsu," said Eiichi, "you go on with it. If you don't go for them now you mayn't get a chance again."

"Will you help us, mister?"

"If standing by you is any use . . ."

"That'll be fine. Won't you go with us to-day? When we get before them directors we mayn't be able to talk to 'em."

"If what you have told me is all, there's no difficulty about my going with you."

"All right. I'll just run over to Akiyama's house and tell him you're coming with us."

But Eiichi stopped him.

"Katsu," he asked, "have you decided yet what demands you are going to make on the company?"

"No, we ain't yet, only last night we fixed that wages mustn't go down any more and when any one gets hurt or burnt there's got to be some sort of help given 'em and when one of the hands dies there's got to be something coming by way of consolation."

"That's all right," said Eiichi, as Katsunosuké was about to step into the yard, "you run along."

CHAPTER LVII

At the Matchworks



IT was past one o'clock in the afternoon when Niimi, with Katsunosuké and Akiyama, started off for the Kobé Matchworks. They found not a soul in the shops—not even the manager or any of the directors. Only in the office there were three or four clerks in Japanese dress with aprons, who were turning over the account books. The delegates explained to a clerk the object of their visit, and asking them to wait he left them in front of the office while he kept ringing the telephone. He was calling up the manager and the directors. Just then an unpleasant old man came out and asked them to step in. He led them to the reception-room, speaking to them very brusquely. Ten minutes passed, and then another ten. Although called the reception-room, it was but a poor place, without any ornaments and with a desk covered with dust.

While they were waiting, Akiyama and Katsunosuké told Niimi many stories about the cruelty of the company to the work-people and the goings on of the officials with loose women.

"In the drying-room," said Akiyama, "they has a fire about every three months, and every time some two or three of the girls get burned. You'd be amazed at the awful way the company treats 'em. Last year, in the spring, there was a woman burned to death in the drying-room, and what do you think they did? They give the family ¥20 to console 'em,—bought 'em off with only ¥20, mind you. And that Morioka—he's the manager—they do say he was a worker himself once—he's out with women every night and getting dead drunk! It's cruel."

Akiyama was a big, warm-hearted fellow, with his hair all standing on end like Ishikawa Goemon, the noted robber, and a

red face covered with pimples. He looked a very devil of a chap, but was actually most amiable.

In the intervals of their talk they listened, expecting some one to come every minute; but no one came. At last, after they had been waiting what seemed to them more than an hour, Morioka, the manager, and Osaka, the president of the company, together with another man, came impressively into the room. Osaka was a tall thin man, over fifty, bald in front, with scanty eyebrows and almond eyes. Morioka was a man of medium height. He had his hair cut in a fashionable style and had large eyes, thin lips and a mouth full of gold teeth. He was the first to speak.

"Well, Akiyama, my man, what's your business?"

"I've just got something to ask about."

"And who is this?"

"This here's Mr. Niimi. He's a Christian pastor down in Shinkawa."

"And for what business did you want to bring the Christian pastor to this place?" asked Morioka. Then turning to Katsunosuké he said, "Look here, Katsu, after all the help given you by this company for nearly ten years, don't you think you're behaving very impudently? And it was you too who incited the workpeople to strike, by your speech."

"Yes," said Katsu, "that's true. That was me," and he gave a side glance with his big eyes while his mouth grew sterner. "Mister Morioka, just look here. I don't know much, but it seems to me that it's you that's got the impudence. The hands work from morning to night for 50 sen or ¥1 and you go about with loose women every night."

"Look here, Katsu," replied the manager, "did you come here to have a quarrel? Because if you did you can have as big a quarrel as you like, see."

Mr. Osaka lit a cigarette.

"Now, Morioka, my dear fellow," he said, "if you get so excited we shan't be able to discuss matters. What are the workpeople's demands? That is what we want to hear," and he turned to Akiyama. "What demands do you make on the company? That is what we should like to hear."

In answer Akiyama drew from his bosom a sheet of paper and laid it down on the dusty table. Morioka took it up. Upon

it was written the demands of the men according to the advice Niimi had given them. The paper had evidently been written by Katsunosuké himself. In his unformed handwriting was written the following:—

“The workers at the Kobé Matchworks make the following demands on the company:

“(1) Wages shall not be lowered in future.

“(2) The sanitary conditions of the workshops shall be improved and provision made for those injured.

“(3) Suitable provision shall be made on the death of any of the workers.

“Signed by the delegates.

“Kamematsu Akiyama.

“Katsunosuké Yamauchi.”

Morioka passed the paper to Osaka, and Osaka in turn handed it to the stranger who accompanied them. Meanwhile both sides remained silent.

“There doesn’t seem anything here to strike about,” said Morioka to Akiyama.

“But what I spoke to you about the day before yesterday,—that girl, you know, Tomé Sakai—that got burned,—what are you going to do about her? She was burned something terrible, and if you don’t give her nothing—well then, you ain’t got no compassion in you, and me and my mates can’t go on working for you with any feeling of safety.”

“Tomé Sakai? Not do anything for her? But we have already done something for her, as we intended all along.”

“When?”

“The day before yesterday,” said Morioka; “something was left for her immediately.”

“I never heard of it and I went to Sakai’s house the day before yesterday and yesterday too. I never heard a word about it, so there. You’re a fine liar, you are.”

Morioka turned red, but said nothing.

Niimi, who had been following the conversation, began to feel disgusted. Meanwhile the stranger who had accompanied the members of the company was staring at his face hard enough to bore a hole in it.

Osaka turned to Akiyama and began speaking in a calm tone.

"If we were to listen to all the men's demands," he said, "the company wouldn't be able to go on. You demand that wages shall not be lowered, but if we can't get our prices the company can't continue operations without lowering the wages. If we go on paying the same wages as before, we can't pay even the interest on our loans."

"And if you go on lowering the wages any more," said Akiyama, "we shan't be able to get enough to eat. You may think it very funny that the workers make such a fuss over five or ten sen, but I tell you it means a lot of money to us. I've got a family of eight persons to keep, and I tell you we can't live on ninety sen or a yen a day. Seventy sen goes every day in buying the rice we want, and there ain't much left over for the education of the kids and all the rest of it."

"Akiyama, how many are there besides you and your wife?" asked Morioka.

"Well, there's my mother and me and the missus, and from the eldest girl—she's twelve—down to the baby there's five kids. That makes eight in all."

"What a lot of children," said Morioka. "You ought to be more careful."

"Well, me and the missus sleeps together, and it can't be helped unless I kill her."

"Well, Mister Morioka," said Katsu, "what are you going to do for us?"

"Now look here," said Morioka, "don't you think it would be better for you to stop this strike and come back to work from to-morrow morning? Then you shall see what fine things I'm going to do for you."

"What, just give in, without getting anything?"

"Of course. If we were to listen to all the demands of the men we shouldn't be able to live."

"But we can't go away without getting something. We shouldn't be able to show our faces if we didn't get these three things."

"I don't know whether you ringleaders will be able to show your faces anywhere, but I know this, that if we gave in to your demands the company would come down with a crash. Don't you know, Katsu, that a strike is a criminal offence in Japan?"

"Well, it ain't to be helped if I am a criminal. I shall get all the blame, so it don't matter. But, Mister Morioka, these three,—ain't you going to give 'em to us?"

"No. If we gave in the workers would get so overbearing we shouldn't know what to do with them."

"All the workers has got phossy jaw and all their teeth is coming out like my sister. Ain't you going to do nothing about it but just look on?"

"Katsu, you're getting really impudent. How can a young fellow not yet of age like you understand anything? This company is doing everything that the law provides. We have done nothing which you can find fault with."

"Are you going to pretend you don't know even if the workers die of starvation?"

"Oh, you're a Socialist, are you? You've been here ten years. Have you forgotten all the kindness the company has shown you?"

"Kindness! Kindness from this company! We never had no kindness. It's we who've made the money for the company, but it's never showed us a bit o' kindness. It's the other way about. It took my sister's life, this company did."

Katsu's tone had become that of one talking to himself.

"It's no use talking to such a dunderhead as you," said Morioka. "You're discharged. Get out."

"Mister Morioka," said Akiyama, "ain't that a bit rough on Katsu? What's Katsu done wrong? He's only come here to speak on behalf of the workers. If you fire him you'll make the others pretty mad."

"Akiyama," said Morioka, "I discharge you too from today. I tell you we can't accept these demands. Let the men come to us one by one and then we will talk to them. We engaged them singly and we'll talk to them singly. You may go on striking and stop the machinery for two or three days if you like, but we can't listen to such demands. Don't you know that a strike is against the law? Isn't it provided in Article 17 of the Police Regulations for preserving peace and order that any one who strikes is liable to imprisonment for not less than one month nor more than six months? Akiyama, don't you know that?"

"I don't know nothing about it," said Akiyama.

"Katsu, don't you know?"

"Yes, I know," said Katsu, "but if you think you're going to frighten us I tell you straight that if you cut down the workers' wages any more they won't be able to buy enough to eat and they won't mind going to prison just for a month."

Katsu spoke according to the bringing up of the slums, where prison has no terrors.

"Well, Mister Morioka," said Akiyama, "you ain't going to listen to our demands and you're going to fire me and Katsu, are you?"

"That's so," replied Morioka, "we can't listen to you, and you and Katsu have got to get out. The company will go to smash if it keeps men who incite the others to strike."

On hearing this Akiyama rose from his chair and fixed an angry look on Morioka.

"You, Morioka," he said, "what do you damn well think we are? Don't you know that even the smallest worms have souls? I've worked myself to death for this company for seventeen years, and then you turn round and say it's the company that has been doing all the kindness, and, because we come to you on behalf of the workers, you damn well fire us. Look here, you Morioka, damn you, what the hell d'you think we're made of?" and in his excitement Akiyama tried to get round the table to where Morioka was sitting. Katsu tried to pull him back, but Akiyama was too excited to listen to him.

"If they've thrown me out," he went on, "then I don't belong to this company no more. Anyway, if I've got to go to prison for striking I may as well have something worth going for, so I'll knock your damn old head off before I go. Some one's got to give a lesson to a greedy old devil like you," and almost before he had finished speaking he caught hold of the front of Morioka's coat and with his right fist gave Morioka four or five punches on the jaw.

Morioka jumped up to defend himself and Niimi, who had been gazing silently at the suspicious stranger, also jumped up to soothe Akiyama. But Akiyama would not listen, even when Katsu tried to quiet him. He would not let go of Morioka's coat.

Osaka continued to sit quite quietly in his chair.

Then the stranger whom Niimi had thought suspicious began to speak.

"You, Akiyama and Katsu," he said, "you must come at once to the Kobé Police Station. You're wanted."

He spoke quietly, but Akiyama was so surprised that he let go of Morioka's coat.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am a detective from the Kobé Police Station. You must both of you come at once with me, do you hear?"

"You ain't got no reason for taking me into custody," said Akiyama.

"Never mind," said the detective, "you come along."

"There you are," said Morioka, "that's what comes of you workers getting insolent."

The detective took the two men out of the room and Eiichi saw them disappear along Onoé-dori, going in the direction of Sannomiya in the early winter twilight. He hastened off to the slums to announce that Akiyama and Katsu had been arrested.

After he had left the news at Katsu's house Eiichi immediately went to the house of Tomé Sakai in Azuma-dori. The house consisted of two two-mat rooms and in the back one a girl of eleven years old was lying. She had a round face, with sunken eyes and a skin as white as a European's. In the slums such white skins are not uncommon. Her body was covered with flour. The mother, who was an ugly one-eyed woman, told Eiichi she had six children and that her husband had been sent to prison for stealing a cask worth thirty-six sen. From this Eiichi knew that Katsunosuké's statement that he had been sent to prison for gambling was inaccurate.

Eiichi asked if any inquiries had been made by the Match Company.

"Yes, they been here a while ago," said the mother, "and left three yen wrapped in a bit o' paper."

"Three yen?" said Eiichi, thinking that he had not heard correctly, but the woman repeated that it was three yen.

Eiichi then told her that the three of them had been to the Match Works to negotiate with the company and that finally Akiyama and Katsunosuké had been arrested.

Eiichi was anxious about Tomé's condition and made many inquiries. Finding that a doctor had not yet been called, he hastened off to the local physician, Dr. Tazawa, and got him to come.

Dr. Tazawa examined the girl but only said that her condition was dangerous. Eiichi asked if anything could be done, but the doctor said that it was too late.

"Will she die?" asked Eiichi, and the doctor said she would if erysipelas developed.

The mother did not appear to be troubled at this announcement, but Eiichi was shocked. Dr. Tazawa went away without telling them what to do.

Eiichi went to call Dr. Maeda, who lived across the river. Dr. Maeda received him very kindly and, after hearing from him the condition of the patient, prepared bandages and accompanied him to the house, where he took the flour off Tomé's burns and bound them up after applying some medicine. Where she had been burned the skin had become inflamed and Eiichi was shocked at her condition.

After Tomé had been bandaged Eiichi listened to the mother's story of how they lived. In the meantime, however, Hanaé came to tell him that a number of the workers had collected at Akiyama's house and were consulting as to what was to be done, and would he please come immediately. Eiichi went off at once to Onoé-dori, to Akiyama's house, a little one-storied building of two rooms, one four and the other six mats. He found the house filled with some thirty people, so that there was hardly room to move. Among them was the elder brother of the gamin Matsuzo Iwanuma, whom Eiichi had taken under his care, and Tsuchida, whose love affair with Katsu's sister had caused so much dissension in the house next door in the autumn. But the ablest seemed to be an intelligent-looking young man named Horié.

Eiichi related the details of the negotiations with the company and how the company had sent three yen to Tomé Sakai's house, and said that since the company had had Akiyama and Katsu arrested there was nothing to be done but continue the fight boldly. This, of course, meant the continuance of the strike.

Tsuchida expressed great sympathy with Katsunosuké.

"That company's well known for its obstinacy," he said. "We got to go for 'em this time."

Horié was troubled at Akiyama's plight, and Eiichi explained the meaning of the seventeenth article of the Police Peace Regulations.

The strike continued for another day, but the workers were soon unable to maintain their solidarity, and some of them went back to work. Then the workers' committee placed a picket at the gate of the works, and soon after Tsuchida came to Eiichi's house to inform him of this a neighbour of Tomé Sakai's came to say that she was dead. Then, in turn, came Hirano, the higher police official from the Kobé Police Station who was always coming,—a fat, square-faced man.

"Mr. Niimi," he announced politely, "the Chief of the Judicial Section of the Police Station would like to see you this morning. Could you come at once?"

Eiichi thought that matters were now hopeless. When he went to the Police Station, the Chief of the Judicial Section, who appeared to know all that took place at the meeting the night before, stated firmly that he must charge Eiichi with being the instigator of the strike. Eiichi made no answer to the charge. He merely told the official that he wished to go home for a short time to attend his family affairs and arrange the funeral of Tomé Sakai, after which he would go to prison.

On his way home Eiichi ordered a coffin and bearers as he passed the Hanaman, and went at once to Sakai's house. There he looked at Tomé's white face and shut, sunken eyes. The sight was all the more pitiful because a baby was sleeping by the side of the corpse, as they had no other quilt.

Eiichi conducted the funeral hastily as he was afraid that the police would be sent from the station to fetch him at any moment. When the coffin arrived he himself clothed the body in the only nightdress he had left and placed it in the coffin with the bandages still on.

It was just noon and Miss Higuchi, according to her usual custom, had come to Eiichi's house during the dinner interval at the Kobé Printing Works. When she heard that Eiichi was conducting a funeral she went just as she was, in her working dress, to help him. Eiichi felt relieved. He and Miss Higuchi

offered up a short prayer and finished the service with a reading from the Bible.

The funeral escort was just starting when they saw standing at the door another police official—not Hirano, but Arita, a darkish man of five feet eight in height, who wore coloured glasses.

“Mr. Niimi,” he said, “I have come to inform you that your presence is required at the Procurator’s Office in the Kobé District Court by two o’clock. If you can I should like you to come with me.”

With this he handed to Eiichi a large grey envelope with the seal of the Procurator’s Office, containing the summons.

Although it was a day in February, the middle of winter, the sun was shining with dazzling brilliance into every corner of the slums in a way to make the heart rejoice. Eiichi took the summons and uttered a silent prayer as he looked at the noonday sun.

Eiichi explained the circumstances very briefly to Miss Higuchi, —that he was going to the Procurator’s Office and that perhaps he would not be able to return for five or six months, and that she must consult with Dr. Williams after he had gone and ask his services for the good of the mission. He also requested her to accompany the funeral of Tomé to the Kasugano crematorium. Eiichi then accompanied the police official out of the alley, followed by the tears of Miss Higuchi.

Arita accompanied Eiichi to the Procurator’s Office of the Kobé District Court, where they arrived after one o’clock, and Eiichi had to wait in a wide stone passage for more than an hour before he was summoned by the Procurator. The police official had gone away after he had seen Eiichi into the passage and Eiichi sat upon a hard narrow bench staring at the stone floor, awaiting examination. He passed the time in prayer and meditation, while ever and anon the vision of Tomé Sakai’s corpse came clearly before his eyes. Eiichi thought of Lincoln’s night of prayer before he issued his proclamation for the abolition of slavery, and he remained sunk in prayer and meditation on the hard narrow bench. He felt that this affair was a stumbling-block in his path, but he believed that he had not done anything wrong; all progress in the world was in that way.

They could not imprison his soul, and he made up his mind to spending five or six months in prison in prayer and meditation.

Forty minutes,—fifty minutes passed while he waited for the Procurator. The westering sun shone into the windows, and it seemed that the Procurator's Office, having finished all the business during the morning, was not going to examine anybody in the afternoon. Eiichi was the only one waiting.

Five minutes elapsed and then ten minutes. Eiichi continued to pray silently. The stone passage was suffused with a beautiful radiance.

CHAPTER LVIII

Conclusion—Eiichi's Examination



THE room for the examination of accused persons was very quiet. It was a comfortless chamber with white-washed walls, but this did not concern Eiichi. There was a large glass window to the east, but apparently it did not catch the light, as the room was very gloomy. Opposite the window was a three-storied red-brick building, the Procurator's Office, where a number of Procurators and clerks were continually coming and going. Eiichi thought with a shiver how the Procurators worked there every day professionally to punish people. The man who had conducted him to the room peeped in as he passed along the passage.

Eiichi looked at the soot-spots on the ceiling, at the spiders' webs in the corners, at the trees outside, which seemed to expand and contract owing to the refraction of the glass in the window, at the patterns formed by the inkstains on the desk. Everything was very still.

At times anxiety took possession of Eiichi's mind, but he soon dismissed it. In his heart he felt that he had acted righteously and had nothing to fear. "When they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak you, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." He remembered that these words were in the Bible and he was not afraid. The trial scene in "Alice in Wonderland" also came to his mind and he chuckled to himself.

Just then the Procurator came in and Eiichi rose respectfully. The Procurator asked Eiichi to sit down, and, after putting a notebook marked "Civil Commotions" on the desk, he sat down directly opposite Eiichi.

"Is your name Eiichi Niimi?"

"Yes."

"What is your business?"

"I am a teacher of Christianity."

"Where did you go to school?"

"After attending the Middle School I spent four or five years studying at different colleges."

"Are your parents alive?"

"No."

"How old are you?"

"I am twenty-three years old."

The Procurator did not relax the muscles of his face but questioned him sternly. Eiichi thought that a Procurator's must be a distressing profession; something a little more human would be preferable.

"Where do you live?"

"I live at 220 Kitahon-machi, Kobé."

"How long have you lived there?"

"This is the third year that I have lived there."

"What do you do there?"

Eiichi felt very cold about the legs. The Procurator, while he warmed his hands at the brazier, kept his eyes fixed on Eiichi's face, and Eiichi in turn gazed at the Procurator.

"I assist people in distress," he said.

"It is said that you preach Socialism. Is it true?"

Eiichi was silent.

"What connection have you with a man named Katsu?"

"If by Katsu you mean Katsunosuké Yamauchi I am well acquainted with him because he lives next door to me."

"Why did you incite that young man to go on strike?"

"I do not remember that I incited him to strike."

"But Katsu says you did."

"That is plainly a mistake. It was after the strike started that he came to consult me."

"But it is stated that it was you who drew up the men's demands,—Katsu says so."

"That is wrong. I told him to put down what he thought best."

"Then I ask you why did you go with Akiyama and Katsu to interview the directors of the Kobé Match Company?"

"I went because Katsu asked me to."

"It is stated that you have very extreme opinions. What are your principles actually?"

"My principles are those of Christian Socialism."

"Then you have no use for the ———*?"

"No, that is not the case. What I claim is just treatment for the poor and the oppressed workers."

The Procurator quietly wrote something down in his notebook and after a pause continued his examination.

"What do you mean by just treatment? Do you mean the equal distribution of property?"

"No, it means giving the workers a fair remuneration and the taking away from the idle rich of the dividends falling into their pockets."

"Do you believe that time will ever come?"

"I believe it will."

"Then you have hopes of a revolution?"

The Procurator asked this question with a glare.

"No, I do not necessarily desire a revolution," answered Eiichi.

"Then how can your idle dream be realised? Is there any way it can be brought about without a revolution?"

"I think it will come by a change of heart among the people and by the development of workers' organisations."

"No, you don't. You want to bring about a revolution. Your idea is to revolutionise the country by inciting the poor and the workers. That's what it looks like by the way you are going on. Isn't that right?"

"If you choose to regard it like that it's your own affair."

"My own affair? What do you mean?"

The Procurator's eyebrows went up and he shouted this in a loud voice. Eiichi had had his eyes cast down, but, startled by the Procurator's shout, he raised them to stare at him.

"What do you mean by looking at me like that?" thundered the Procurator, who seemed to be trying to fluster Eiichi.

Eiichi was silent, leaving it to the Procurator to fall into a passion. He was more interested in making a psychological study of the Procurator,—in watching the changing clouds of passion sweep across his face. He felt as if he were making a

*The blank is in the original. Apparently the reference is to the Emperor.

practical study in the class-room of an actual case of mental disorder, so calm was he and so far from being confused. On closer examination it appeared that the Procurator's profession was a very disagreeable one. It was a profession requiring one to be angry, to pose as righteous, to judge one's fellow-creatures. Worse than that it unhappily exacted a belief that all persons were sinners.

This only made Eiichi sympathise all the more with the Procurator, who lived only in the past, not in the present or future; who spent his time in investigating deeds done long ago,—sometimes the crimes of five or six years past,—not only the offence of some woman from the slums who had stolen a petticoat, but also the sending to prison for a year and a half of a man who had stolen a cask. It was in such useless tasks that the Procurators wasted their lives, Eiichi thought; it was impossible not to feel sympathy for them.

"What do you mean by staring at me in that insolent way?"

The Procurator continued to rage; his face twitched and his lips grew pale.

"Without a revolution how can you overthrow our present social organisation? I want you to make that point clear to me."

Eiichi was silent. One minute, two minutes passed. Some five or six sparrows were hopping from branch to branch of the camphor-tree in the Court garden, thoroughly enjoying themselves. Eiichi wondered if there were any Mr. Procurators in sparrow-land. He was silent because he knew that it was no use saying anything to the enraged Procurator.

Three minutes passed, four minutes, five minutes. The Procurator had cast down his eyes and was gazing vacantly at his notebook. He was trembling to his finger tips. It was impossible to tell which was the judicial official. The accused for his part was quite calm; it was the judge who was agitated. Eiichi thought that he would not reply to the stupid questions that the Procurator kept repeating, but he kept his eyes wide open while he gazed at the desk. Man silent was more lovable than man talking.

But the Procurator's profession demanded that he should not be silent.

"Why don't you answer me? If you won't answer means can be found to make you."

At this Eiichi broke his long silence.

"Do you want to make me fly into a passion?" he asked. "However much you try I shall certainly not get angry. It is no use my answering you while you are in such a passion yourself and I certainly shall not do it."

This answer appeared to make the Procurator think and he was silent. There was silence between them for another three or four minutes, after which the Procurator went out of the room, leaving the police report, his notebook and everything else on the desk as they were.

Eiichi left alone in the room was again plunged into meditation. Ten minutes passed and the Procurator did not return. By stretching his neck Eiichi could read upside down what was written in the police record lying open on the desk. It was a report on his conduct.

"This person, though he appears guileless, is crafty and by the extreme speeches he makes seems to cherish the idea of inciting a revolution."

This sentence ran over two lines and a half. Eiichi understood now why he had been so persistently questioned about a revolution.

The Procurator came back along the stone passage. He seemed to be finding the examination troublesome.

As soon as the Procurator came in a clerk from the Procurator's Office followed him with a writing-box in one hand.

The Procurator began Eiichi's examination all over again from the beginning.

"What do you mean by workers' organisations?"

Eiichi felt it very tedious to have to answer such questions.

"Workers' organisations are to enable the workers to ward off oppression by the capitalists."

"But isn't that the same as Socialism?"

"Socialism is only a principle. Workers' organisations are practical associations of workers."

"Are these workers' organisations for the purpose of starting strikes?"

"No, they are not specially for starting strikes. They are for enabling the workers to improve their position."

After that the Procurator asked many questions about the strike at the Kobé Match Works and as he had now become very calm Eiichi answered all the questions quietly, while the clerk wrote the answers down one by one.

Eiichi had made up his mind that he would have to go to prison although he did not think he had committed any offence.

The lights were lit before the examination was completed, when Eiichi was allowed to go home for the time being. As he trudged home along busy Moto-machi, deep in thought, it seemed to him that the present social system was worthless beyond conception, based as it was upon an insecure foundation, and he smiled as he entered the slums at Shinkawa.

Almost before he had got into the alleys the children had collected to escort him to his house, holding on to his two hands, to his sleeves, to the ends of his girdle, to everything that they could seize hold of. Eiichi stroked the cheeks of Kinu, a little girl five years old that year, the daughter of a scavenger, and compared her face with that of the Procurator. How degenerate was the face of the Procurator compared with Kinu's! "Yes, the slums are best," he said to himself. "The slums are best. With such children yearning for my love I will leave the slums no more." In spite of his hatred for the country of heartless capitalism he felt that he could not abandon his attachment to the world of beautiful children, poor as they were.

Although Eiichi expected every day to receive an order from the Court or a notice from the police, nothing came. In spite of his anxiety he continued to enjoy his life in the slums and month after month came and passed.

Thus Eiichi, his mind at rest, continued to minister to the poor.

THE END.





